THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 17 July, 1935 Number 7

The General Election
R. P. D.

Present Phase of the Arms Race
T. H. WINTRINGHAM

The Surrender of the Labour Party
JOHN STRACHEY

Two Articles on Lancashire
Manchester and War : The T.U.C. and Cotton

A Trade Union Discussion
The Announcement of a Conference in August and Contributions by TOM MANN and 7 others

Towards the People's Front in France
OBSERVER

Book Reviews
EMILE BURNS on JOHN STRACHEY
DAVID GUEST on BERTRAND RUSSELL
etc. etc.

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The Labour Monthly

LANCASHIRE

Delegate Conference

AGAINST

WAR and FASCISM

WILL BE HELD ON

SATURDAY, JULY 13th, 1935, at 3 p.m.
CAXTON HALL, CHAPEL STREET, SALFORD.

Chairman : **Councillor HARRY FRANKLAND.**

Principal Speakers :

WILLIAM WHITTAKER

(E.C., Nelson and Colne Divisional Labour Party ; member Amalgamated Association of Beamers, Twisters and Drawers.)

JOHN STRACHEY

(Author of *The Menace of Fascism*, etc.)

The Subjects for Discussion on the Agenda will include :

1.—The daily increasing preparation for war and the piling up of armaments (trebling of the British Air Force, preparation for " black-out " and gas mask drill in Lancashire, Arms Inquiry, etc.).

2.—In relation to this the Southport Labour Party Conference decisions on war and the united struggle against war. The meaning of collective security and the peace policy of the Soviet Union.

3.—The threat of Fascism in Britain and in particular the attempt of Mosley to make Lancashire the base for his British Union of Fascists.

4.—The crisis in the cotton industry and the way out for the workers : legalisation of wages, the spinning redundancy scheme, the T.U.C.'s proposals for a public corporation, etc.

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THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 17 JULY, 1935 NUMBER 7

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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Published at

7 JOHN STREET, Theobald's Road, LONDON, W.C.1.

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The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices :
7 JOHN STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.
Telephone : HOLBORN 6656

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1934 : *Subscription Rates*
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One year - 7/- Six months - 3/6

Abroad :

One year 8/- or $2.00 Six months 4/- or $1.00

American Subscription Representative :—Philip Novick, 270 Broadway, Suite 1401, New York City, U.S.A.

The Labour Monthly is also obtainable wholesale from The Workers' Bookshop, 38 Clerkenwell Green, E.C.1.

Advertisement Rates : £8 8s. od. per cover page and pro rata. £5 5s. od. per page (ordinary position) and pro rata (⅛th page minimum).

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The articles in *The Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A. as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

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Stabilisation Means—Retreat

THIS month we have to say that we have only just held our own. That is to say, in spite of the fact that the list of donations is quite considerable—and here we wish to thank all those who have given all they can—contributions to the Debt Fund have only served to fill the gap between the total of the monthly guarantee fund so far reached and the total of the monthly deficit of £28. That is to say that none is available to reduce the debt.

Readers are especially appealed to, not only to see that this month's Donations will enable us to record in August a better position, but also because as is well known the summer months tend to be a comparatively lean period for all publications.

A new effort is needed to clear off the Debt Fund. Circulation is rising, but until we can reach that objective when we can pay our way, we must still rely on our supporters.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The General Election—Reconstruction of the National Government—A Move to the Right—The Last Phase of MacDonald—Obituary of MacDonald—Anti-Soviet Foreign Minister—National Government's Increased Confidence—Labour Party's Responsibility—The United Front Victories in February—Parallel Labour Electoral Advance—Labour Co-operation with National Government—Labour Electoral Setback—The United Front and the General Election—Lessons of France—The United Front and the Petty Bourgeoisie—The United Front and Fascism—Electoral Advances of Communism—Lessons for the General Election.

THE coming General Election is being prepared under conditions which stamp it as an election of war-preparation. This is indicated, not only by the character of the reconstruction of the National Government to the right, but above all by the flood of monarchist-chauvinist propaganda which has been let loose through the collaboration of the National Government and the Labour Party, as well as by the accompanying flinging of cheapjack imperialist decorations and titles, as in wartime, to the Labour leaders for their work of disruption of the working class. In this way it is sought to stem the rising tide of the united working class front which threatened to engulf the National Government in the earlier part of the year, and to prepare a war atmosphere for the election of what may prove to be the future war parliament. The National Government and the Labour Party leadership are co-operating with every weapon in their armoury to defeat the united working-class front, whose successes in France have alarmed the bourgeoisie in all countries, and to prepare the conditions for the future war for British Imperialism. The Labour Party leaders are less concerned to defeat the National Government than to

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defeat the working-class front. It is evident (as the episode of Morrison and the *Observer* statement, analysed in last month's Notes, demonstrated) that they are preparing to enter a future Grand Coalition Government in the event of war. This practical collaboration of the National Government and the Labour Party leadership on all the main lines of imperialist policy, brought even to ostentatious ceremonial expression in the Jubilee debauch, creates the problem of the elections for the working class. How to realise the working-class fight, the fight of all socialist and anti-war elements against the imperialists and war makers, on the widest possible front at the coming elections, which are of vital importance for the whole political future, is now the practical problem which requires the most careful attention and the most active preparations.

WHAT has the reconstruction of the National Government shown? This typically oligarchic change of government, completely planned and carried out from above, without any pretence of consulting Parliament of nominal democratic forms, throws a certain light on present trends of bourgeois policy. The most noticeable feature is the dropping of the much discussed project of the broad coalition, to include Lloyd George, possibly Churchill, Austen Chamberlain and other personalities, and even an additional labour leader if one could be secured. This project has been postponed for a future emergency; the present is an interim arrangement of a more limited character. The trend here revealed is of some importance. A few months ago the movement to include Lloyd George in the National Government was very strong; "a numerical majority of Ministers are in favour of including Mr. Lloyd George" (*Observer*, February 2, 1935). Such a move would have represented an attempt to throw a "progressive" cover over the unpopular and discredited National Government. Why has this plan been dropped? It may be noted that the height of the campaign to include Lloyd George coincided exactly with the height of the united front offensive against the National Government; February 6 was the date of the Government retreat before the united front

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over the new unemployed scales. But with the passing of the immediate danger the projected manœuvre was thrown aside. This change reflects a definite change in the political situation which it will be of importance to analyse further. For the moment it is sufficient to note that the present reconstruction of the National Government represents a definite rejection of the projected " progressive " manœuvre and a concentration instead on an openly reactionary Conservative governmental bloc. Lloyd George is left to conduct his campaign from outside, with his new " Peace and Reconstruction " Manifesto, as an opponent and critic of the National Government, seeking to rally a miscellany of scattered liberal forces on a programme closely allied to that of the Labour Party.

THIS character of the reconstruction of the National Government is further expressed in the open proclamation of the Conservative leader, Baldwin, as the governmental leader in place of the puppet MacDonald. The completely squeezed out sponge, MacDonald, is dropped as soon as the last ounce of propaganda use has been extracted, and is passed from the shop window to the back of the shop as damaged goods, rapidly passing into the category of a G. N. Barnes and similar types. It is impossible to record this culminating stage of the one-time leader and expounder of the " British school of socialism," the main protagonist of reform against revolutionary socialism, and the chosen voice of the Labour Party for thirty years, without passing a comment on the political —not merely personal—lesson of this process, a lesson which has not yet been learnt by the British Labour Movement. The self-styled founder of " evolutionary socialism " has indeed evolved ; but the evolution has been more visible than the socialism. To-day, when the outcome is visible to the dullest, the Labour Party leaders and scribes cast their stone on MacDonald and denounce him. To-day they repeat what the Communists said fifteen years ago, when it was still timely to say it. But where were they fifteen years ago, when the fight needed to be fought when the harm was being done, when the

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Communists alone were fighting the poison of MacDonald and showing with literal exactness its future outcome ?

WHO was then right over MacDonald, the Communist International with its " failure to understand British conditions," or the Labour Party leaders and I.L.P. of the time ? What is the verdict of history to-day on those old controversies in the remorseless light of facts ? The I.L.P. has passed to repudiation of its reformist past and is increasingly advancing to revolutionary understanding. MacDonald and Snowden, who once proposed to show the alternative path to revolutionary Marxism, have passed to impotent and universally despised tools of the bourgeoisie. But has the lesson been learned in the policy of the Labour Party ? The same policy still continues. The lesson of MacDonald is attempted to be treated as if it were only a personal episode, as if MacDonald had gone back on his principles. On the contrary, MacDonald has been consistent from first to last and conformed to his principles, the principles of opposition to the class struggle and subservience to the bourgeoisie ; it is his reformist critics who are inconsistent. And if the final outcome of those principles is seen to-day to be despicable in the eyes of all, it is because those principles themselves, because the whole philosophy of reformism was from the outset mean and despicable, and has only received its crowning expression and symbolisation in the man.

IN the obituary of MacDonald it is tempting to quote the comment of a foreign observer, a French Conservative critic with a sharp pen, a reactionary pen, but a keen sense of realities, the well-known " Pertinax " (*Echo de Paris*, June 7, 1935), as an example of the impression on outside opinion :

> MacDonald formed and led three ministries, in 1924, 1929 and in 1931. Yet whoever attempts to define this personality which so long influenced the life of Britain and the British Empire has the feeling of one who would try to seize a phantom, to give shape to a mist or to carve a figure in fluidity. Gladstone, Asquith, Balfour, Lloyd George : all these names call up definite acts and clearly marked physiognomies. But after taking into account all the

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> MacDonald has said and done, it is impossible to find a single thing that has anything about it stable and lasting. . . . Why could this man, whose inflated sonorous voice contrasted with the timid vagueness of his thought, pass to the first rank ? Why among the socialists did a Snowden or a Henderson, more energetic than he or perhaps more sincere, have to give place to him ? Why did the Conservative Party, returned with a triumphant majority after the collapse of the pound, so obstinately maintain this man in the forefront ? There is one answer only : convenience, expediency. To Baldwin he was useful in order to camouflage a Conservative Government with the appearance of a national union. The London drawing rooms were appreciative of the former socialist who had domesticated socialism and dressed it in the fashions of Savile Row. It was precisely his contradictions that won their gratitude.

Adaptability, infinite adaptability to every requirement of the bourgeoisie, infinite shapelessness to fit every policy of imperialism under a vague cloud of socialistic phrases—just this constituted his value to the bourgeoisie at every stage of his career and inevitably fitted him for the highest offices of state in the present period of the transition of capitalist democracy towards fascism. The cruel contempt of the Conservative critic for this empty puppet, with the theatrical voice and manner and not a thought in his head, is justified. But what are we to say of the Labour Party which gave this man his position and accepted his leadership for thirty years ?

TO return to the reconstruction of the National Government. The third significant feature, reinforcing the other two and pointing in the same direction, is the appointment to the most important post in the present situation of diplomatic web-spinning for the future war, the Foreign Office. The moderate bourgeois elements, which were not favourable to the Nazi aggressive plans, stood for a conciliatory attitude to France and the Soviet Union, and gave support to the proposals for collective security in Europe, exerted all their efforts for the appointment of Eden. " Many had hoped that Mr. Eden's brilliant successes at Geneva would have secured him the reversion of the Foreign Office," wrote the *Daily Telegraph* (June 8, 1935), the organ most commonly reflecting the prevalent views in the Foreign Office. But the expectations

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and even prophecies of Eden's appointment represented a failure to understand the decisive line of the National Government's policy of support of the Nazi war plans. Eden was appointed to the duties of representation at the League of Nations, which was thus conspicuously separated from the Foreign Office, that is, from the real foreign policy. To the Foreign Office was appointed the extreme reactionary Hoare, fresh from the laurels of coercion in India, closely connected with the Russian Whites and notoriously anti-Soviet. On this appointment the comments of French and German opinion summarised in the *Observer* (June 9, 1935), may be noted. In French opinion "the personal tendencies of Sir Samuel Hoare are considered to be anti-French, anti-Russian and pro-German." In German opinion "much satisfaction is felt that he at least cannot be dubbed pro-French, and it is thought to be a good sign too that he is reported to be slightly anti-Soviet." The appointment of Hoare to the Foreign Office is not only a signal to the world, but a definite move to smash the remaining tendencies within the Foreign Office which still resist the pro-Nazi policy and seek close relations with France. The line thus brought more and more into the open by his appointment has since been further emphasised by the British-German Naval Agreement, in open violation of Stresa and the Geneva resolution, and the Prince of Wales' message for the "ex-servicemen's" visit of friendship to German Fascism.

WHAT underlies this open movement of the National Government to the right—on the eve of an election and with an unpopular record? It is clear that this movement reflects first and foremost the development of the international situation and the closer advance to war issues. But the manœuvring possibility for such a movement to an open reactionary national-chauvinist front on the eve of an election implies a corresponding development in the internal situation and an increased confidence of the National Government in its position in the country. Upon what is this increased confidence based? In part it is based on the slight upward movement of the economic situation in Britain during the end

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of 1934 and the beginning of 1935. The Board of Trade Index of Production, which had continuously fallen during the first three quarters of 1934 from 105.5 in the first quarter to 104.3 in the second, and 102.9 in the third, rose noticeably to 111.7 in the fourth quarter and to 112.8 in the first quarter of 1935. Exports for the first quarter of 1935 showed an increase of £10 millions on the first quarter of 1934. It may be noted that this advance coincides with the period of intensified war danger and war preparations. Of the increase of exports in the first quarter of 1935 the largest increase to any single country was to Germany, exports to which increased by £2.3 millions or by over 50 per cent. on the preceding year.

THIS advance, however, while giving ample cause for capitalist satisfaction with the National Government, has seen no corresponding advance in the conditions of the working class, on whom the blows of the depression continue heaviest, with only very slight diminution of the total of unemployment and with only a limited restoration of a portion of the cuts inflicted in 1931-3. The economic situation as a whole gives no ground for confidence to the National Government in an appeal to the working-class electorate. For the basis of the increased political confidence of the National Government it is necessary to look, not merely to the limited fluctuations in the economic situation, but to the development of the general political situation in the recent period. And it is here that stands in the forefront the rôle of the Labour Party during this period of developing war issues in directly assisting the attempt to create a wave of national-chauvinist enthusiasm, in directly fighting the united working-class front and collaborating with the National Government, and thus helping to build up the political position of the National Government.

IN order to see sharply the significance of this process it is necessary to recall the situation at the beginning of the year when the united front wave of struggle was reaching a high point and the National Government was in temporary retreat. This was the period of the " curious state of hysteria

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and panic" in ruling class circles which Baldwin in his speech of February 21 described as having prevailed in the preceding weeks and reaching its height in the beginning of February.

> The "curious state of hysteria and panic," as Mr. Baldwin called it on Thursday (February 21), which reached its height about a fortnight ago both in the City and at Westminster seems for the time at all events to have been allayed. (*Times*, February 23, 1935.)

The united front in action swept past the barriers of the Labour Party leadership, which was compelled to follow in the rear with impotent manifestoes after the event seeking to claim the credit for the gains that had been won in spite of them. As the *Times* described the process in South Wales in a subsequent article reviewing the experience:

> In the first instance it was difficult for moderate people to keep out of the movement. . . . The Communists jumped in to lead the opposition, and the Labour Party, many people consider, had to accept the principle of "solidarity" in order to keep up with the pace. (*Times* April 10, 1935.)

The situation in the view of the *Times*, recalled that preceding the General Strike:

> The spirit of 1926, which produced the General Strike, is showing itself again. (*Times*, February 26, 1935.)

IT was in this period, when the united front was strongest, that the Labour electoral sweep reached its highest point. This was conspicuously shown at Wavertree, which polled on February 6. The Labour majority of 1,840 not only replaced a previous 1931 Conservative majority of 23,973, but it contrasted also with a 1929 Conservative majority of 3,295. The Labour vote of 15,611 not only exceeded the 1931 vote of 9,503, but it also exceeded the 1929 vote of 13,585. Thus whereas previously the Labour advance was approaching but not yet in the aggregate equalling the 1929 level, in the moment of the united front struggle it swept beyond it. The successful Labour candidate directly attributed the victory to the struggle against the new unemployed regulations, that is, in fact, to the united front struggle: "Mr. Cleary said that the triumph of Labour was a reflection of the tremendous volume of protest aroused throughout the country by the Unemployment Assistance Board

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regulations" (*Times*, February 7, 1935). The Norwood by-election in March still reflected this process even in this basically reactionary area ; the Conservative majority of 3,348 fell not only below the 1931 majority of 23,634, but also below the 1929 majority of 8,239 ; the Labour vote of 12,799 not only exceeded the 1931 vote of 7,217, but also the 1929 vote of 11,042.

THEN came the Jubilee, the direct collaboration of the Labour Party within the National Government in trying to create a wave of reactionary imperialist sentiment and class unity, and intensified onslaught on the united front. On March 25 the Black Circular was finally adopted by the General Council as a disciplinary ruling to be enforced by the disruption of all trades councils faithful to the principles of working class solidarity and democracy. Drastic instructions were sent from Labour headquarters to all local Labour Parties and Labour Councils to participate in the National Government's celebration and unite with the enemies of the workers. The "Humble Address" to the crowned head of capitalist exploitation and empire slavery was moved by MacDonald and seconded by Lansbury, thus showing demonstratively their united front in service to capitalism. As a sign of the times it may be noted that a quotation from what Keir Hardie wrote of King George in 1914 was refused to be printed by a well-known firm of printers as probably illegal ; what could be freely published in 1914 could not even be reprinted as a historical quotation in 1935—thus showing the advance of liberty, as well as of the Labour Party, between 1914 and 1935.

AND now observe the result reflected in the by-elections, as soon as the National Government and the Labour leadership had thus combined to strangle the rising working-class fight. The West Aberdeen by-election took place on May 2. This had been a Labour seat in 1929. So far from being won back in 1935, it remained in Conservative hands ; the Conservative vote of 16,373 was above the 1929 level of 12,966 ; while the Labour vote of 10,462 was not only below the 1929 level of 15,795, but was even below the 1931

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debacle level of 12,704. The South Aberdeen by-election followed on May 21. The Conservative majority of 10,165 exceeded the 1929 majority of 7,684. The Labour Party vote of 10,760 fell below the 1929 level of 13,856. It is impossible to fail to see the contrast of the two periods, the period of the rising united front struggle and the rising Labour electoral vote, and the period when the Labour Party leadership openly collaborated with the National Government to strangle the united front and its reflection in the setback of the Labour electoral advance.

HOW can the workers transform this situation in the coming General Election? There is only one way: by the establishment of the united working-class front on the widest possible scale, and fighting the election in every possible constituency on the basis of a united front fighting programme in place of the class-collaboration policies of Labourism. This means in the first place the fight of Communist candidates in a series of key constituencies with the support of the militant workers all over the country. It means in the second place the fight of candidates of organisations already participating in the united front, such as the Independent Labour Party. It means in the third place the participation of local Labour Parties in the united working-class front, and the fight to select candidates or pledge candidates on the basis of the united front programme of demands in place of the class-collaboration policies of the Labour Party leadership. Only to the extent that this is realised can the fight of the workers be voiced at the General Election, and representatives be returned to Parliament, with the Communist group as the spearhead and with the possibility of sympathetic united front support from within the ranks of the Labour members, to fight for the demands of the workers.

THE power of the United Front has been shown in the recent French elections, no less than in the circumstances of the fall of the Flandin and Bouisson Governments. The Communists have established themselves as the

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premier party in the whole Paris and Seine region. In the Seine Department, with a population of two millions the Communists won twenty-five of the fifty seats ; their vote of 143,000 on the first ballot contrasted with 80,100 in 1929, an increase of 75 per cent. Even in the reactionary inner Paris they won eight seats against the previous one, and thus stand on the combined Seine General Council as the strongest single party with thirty-three seats. In the municipal elections they won control of 27 municipalities (against a previous 9) in the Seine, representing 718,000 inhabitants, while the next strongest party, the " Republican Concentration " won 16, representing a population of 321,000. Nor has this advance been confined to the capital region of the Seine. The Ministry of the Interior figures for the whole of France, covering 858 towns with over 5,000 inhabitants, show 90 with an absolute majority for the Communists, a net gain of 43, against net losses of every other party. The United Front has resulted in an enormous advance of the working class vote and setback to the bourgeois vote.

AND now observe the reflection of this process of the advancing United Front in the political situation. What brought down the Flandin and the Bouisson Governments with their emergency powers demands ? The division in the Radical Socialist Party, the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie ; the majority of the Radical Socialists, faced with the advance of the United Front and their own electoral weakening, began to be drawn in the wake of the United Front, turned against the leadership of Herriot and the National Union Government of Flandin, and a growing number moved towards the all-embracing " People's Front " against fascism, organised on the initiative of the Communist Party. Never was there a clearer demonstration of the only way to win the petty bourgeoisie, about which the Labour theorists prate so much to-day without understanding, using this necessity of conciliating the middle classes as an excuse to dilute policy, blur class issues and refuse the class front. On the contrary it is precisely the strength and fighting energy of the United Working-class Front which alone can rally and irresistibly wins over the

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ever vacillating elements of the petty bourgeoisie, just as the weakness of the working class fight invariably drives them into the arms of Fascism. This has been demonstrated once again in the effects of the united front advance on the Radical Socialist Party and on the political situation in France.

NO less significant is the effect on French Fascism of the growing strength of the French United Front. Never was there such an opportunity since the days of February, 1934, for a renewed fascist offensive as in the early June days of the successive fall of the Flandin and Bouisson Governments and visible paralysis of the decaying parliamentary régime. In view of the noisy boasts of their armed leagues beforehand, the expectation of such an attack was widespread. But under the given conditions the French Fascists found discretion better than valour. In the face of the overwhelming United Front majority in Paris, they did not even attempt a demonstration in Paris, but called their main demonstration in a remote spot in the country. The Paris correspondent of the *Times* (June 11, 1935), was compelled to comment:

> The defeat of the Flandin and Bouisson Ministries . . . called the bluff of the Nationalist Leagues, who had formed the habit of threatening Parliament with civil war. The diminished ardour of these movements was shown by their failure to take advantage of the crisis. When M. Pietri on Thursday failed to form his Ministry no one would have been surprised to see the Leagues turn out in force. Yet the only demonstration that occurred in Paris were two small scuffles between a few young men and the police in the Boulevard des Italiens and the breaking of the office windows of the *Petit Journal* which advocates devaluation.
>
> The calm of Paris and the country through this crisis shows how artificial and almost fortuitous was the upheaval of February, 1934.

The premature conclusions of the bourgeois democrats as to the supposed defeat and passing away of French Fascism are of course valueless. The decisive battles with French Fascism are still to come. But the power of the United Front as the sole weapon against Fascism has been once again formidably shown by the recent events in France.

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IN all countries Communism is at present rapidly advancing alongside the stationary or declining position of Social Democracy ; and this process has been illustrated in a whole series of elections in different countries of Europe in the present year. The French example, though the most outstanding, does not stand alone. In the recent Czecho-Slovakian general election the Communist vote of 848,000 showed an increase of 14 per cent. alongside a heavy fall in the Social Democratic vote. Nor is this process confined to the larger Communist Parties, but is also marked in the countries where Communism is still winning ground. The recent Dutch provincial elections showed an increase in the Communist vote to 127,000, as again 118,000 in the parliamentary elections of 1933 alongside a decrease of the social democratic vote from 798,000 in 1933 to 782,000 (while the Trotskist-Left-Socialist bloc, pride of the so-called " left parties " of Brockway and sole nucleus of the counter-revolutionary " Fourth International "), collapsed from 75,000 to 51,000) ; this process was most marked in Amsterdam, where the Communists now stand at 47,000 (previous 30,000) against the Social Democratic 118,000. In the recent Brussels by-election the Communist vote increased by 50 per cent. to 18,000 as against the Social Democratic 120,000 (swollen by bourgeois support, as representing the coalition government) ; in the recent Stockholm town election the Communist vote trebled alongside Social Democratic decline.

SUMMARISING the results here shown, it may be said that, where the united front is established, there the total working-class vote shows an enormous increase ; where the united front is refused by the reformist leadership, there Communism none the less advances, but Social Democracy tends to go downwards. The moral for the coming General Election in Britain is obvious : it is of the utmost importance that the united front should be built up on the widest possible basis if the full force of the working class is to be brought into the fight, and if the plan of the Labour Party leadership to damp down the workers' fight is to be defeated. The electoral

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results in the various countries are only a rough and very incomplete picture of tendencies ; but they give some indication of the change that is taking place in the ranks of the working class under the influence of the lessons of the fascist offensive and of the approach of war. We need now to exert all our efforts, despite the peculiar difficulties and obstacles of the British electoral system, to show a corresponding advance of Communism and the united working-class front in the coming elections in Britain.

R. P. D.

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PRESENT PHASE OF THE ARMS RACE

By T. H. WINTRINGHAM

DURING most of the past three years the race in armaments has had a peculiar shape. This race, in which all the leading imperialist powers are involved, was subject to the stimulating influence of a world Disarmament Conference, and was mainly carried out according to the formula of a child's game: no one must move while anyone else is looking. Each ruling class had in 1932-34 its own method of covering up or pretending to cover up its expansion of armaments: the Germans a relatively efficient secrecy, with official denials of facts well known to the world; the British a dexterous hypocrisy, every increase in striking power being only a long overdue "replacement"; the French a conscious rectitude—they only built tanks to strengthen the League of Nations. Within the past few months all this has altered. The race has become open, acknowledged. And therefore it has become very much more rapid. Instead of cautious, stolen steps towards their goal, the Powers are really racing—flying. In this change British imperialism has given the lead and sets the pace.

Setting the pace in this new and acknowledged competition in killing-power, the present Baldwin-MacDonald government is following in the path of all the other Baldwin-MacDonald governments that, under various names, have ruled in London since 1923. Competition in cruisers, on a world scale, was started by the 1924 variant of this familiar form of misrule, known to fame as the first Labour Government. At about the same time rapid technical development of the light machine-gun, or machine-rifle, began here. The development of "close support" artillery (mortars working with infantry or a hundred yards behind them) began in Britain three years before any Continental army moved in that direction. The only amphibian tanks in existence, apart from experimental models abroad, are those made by Vickers. British development of a tank brigade, capable of moving independently at high speeds, has this year been brought to a new level with the institution of a mobile division of all arms. (A "mechanised" division is one in which the divisional transport and guns are petrol-drawn; the infantry marches. In a "mobile" division the infantry also moves in vehicles, right up to the battle zones.)

In these and in a score of different ways, during the period of hidden rearmament—the period when, according to capitalist politicians, including those of Labour Governments, Britain was indulging

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in "unilateral disarmament"—in these ways British imperialism kept ahead of its rivals, or tried to keep ahead.

As was noted in the LABOUR MONTHLY at the time,[1] a decision was taken last summer by the powers that control British world strategy, to prepare its forces for a probable war "in the hinterland of Western Europe." Mr. Baldwin's remark that "our frontier is now on the Rhine" followed a few days after the pronouncement by a Major-General that we then quoted. This decision, and the programme of increase and alteration in armaments implied by it—including 41 new Air Force squadrons—begins the transition to the present armaments race in its new and open form.

At first, when this programme was confined to the Air Force, the Government explained it simply by the desire to have air "defence" strength equal to that of any power within range of Britain. But later other indications of the new line of policy made this argument inadequate. The military correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* wrote:

> An important decision, and re-orientation of aim, is indicated by instructions that have, I understand, been conveyed from the General Staff.
>
> For several years the training of the Army at home has been based on colonial warfare, in the form of major and minor expeditions. In the brigade and divisional exercises the "enemy" has commonly been represented as savage tribesmen or as the forces of an Asiatic state with a comparatively low standard of equipment.
>
> Next year the training will be based primarily on the requirements of hypothetical operations in Europe. (*Daily Telegraph*, October 22, 1934.)

On November 15, 1934, the same correspondent, Captain Liddell Hart, reported "far-reaching plans for the reorganisation of the Army and the creation of an up-to-date Expeditionary Force." These changes, and the increase of armaments necessarily accompanying them (Captain Liddell Hart mentions mechanisation of cavalry regiments, "improvement in the proportion of weapons to men," 52 extra machine-guns per brigade, new tank battalions), could not be camouflaged as replacements and did not, like the air programme, fit into an "equality of arms" propaganda. It was necessary, at some point, to find a convincing excuse for them. It was also necessary to find an excuse for the second stage in the air programme: the acceleration of air rearmament to its present rate. Therefore a growing number of speeches, through the winter, with the burden: "Nazi Germany is the danger; Hitler threatens us." In his broadcast speech on November 16, 1934, this was the essence of Mr. Churchill's "warning." This campaign culminated in Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's "White Paper" of March 4, which is the real beginning of the past three months' open and Gadarene rearmament.

[1] War from the Air. By T. H. Wintringham, August, 1934.

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These facts have to be recalled before it is possible to understand the events of recent months. Without them the sequence of events appears to be one in which the British Government begins a process of rearmament after, and because, it has been made uneasy by Hitler's proclamation of conscription, his announcement of a strong air force, his submarines, etc. Actually the sequence of events is one in which the British Government begins and presses forward a process of rearmament, and later uses the Hitler " threat " to secure placid acceptance of this programme, and of its speeding-up, from the pacifist and Labour Party forces. (It relies on these " opposition " forces for the most subtle and most useful organisation of war feeling : the organisation of the worker's demand for peace round people, institutions and ideas that can swing the workers into support for war.)

There has never been a bigger bluff than the pretence that British imperialism is rearming now because it has suddenly discovered that Germany is rearming.

As the LABOUR MONTHLY has shown month by month, the policy of the National Government here has been continuously one of support for Hitler's rearmament plans, combined with pressure to ensure that these armaments are used in the right direction, eastwards. It must be emphasised now that what has happened in the past few months is not due to the National Government waking with a shock to the realisation that the Frankenstein it has helped to create is larger and uglier than it had intended. Nor is it a question of the section of British imperialism that fears—and with reason—that Nazi Germany may possibly turn westwards, getting, to any extent, the upper hand. The righteous indignation of the British Government at the news of Hitler's conscription measure is sheer bluff, and impudent pretence. The grave concern of London's rulers at the strength of Berlin's air force is ludicrous : they have known the strength of this force all along, have helped it to grow.

Certainly there is a section of British imperialism that fears, and has good reason to fear, that Nazi Germany may turn westwards. When arming gangsters and encouraging them to " pull a difficult job "—in this case a job so difficult as to seem almost impossible—it is wise to keep your own personal arms and bodyguard as efficient and powerful as possible. But it is asking a lot to try, when arming gangsters, to excuse your own arming by " revelations " that these gangsters have got arms ! And the " revelations " of the past few months have been based on facts about German rearmament as well known in London as in Berlin—or Paris.

Let us take conscription first. It became clear, during 1933, that the " voluntary labour camps " in Germany were in fact a system of military training for conscripts. At these camps practice in entrenching, throwing

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hand grenades, and marching with packs was enforced. They were "voluntary" in the sense, that if a lad refused to go to one he lost his job, was barred from relief, and could expect a visit from men in brown shirts. "It is officially estimated," wrote the *Times* Paris correspondent even before these "labour camps" were opened, "that Germany could at short notice put into the field an army of 1,000,000 men." (*Times*, December 10, 1932.) Is it likely that what was known to the *Times* was unknown to the British Government? In "Hitler Rearms" Dorothy Woodman gave evidence for an estimate that the German army, trained and organised, numbered 2,400,000 men by the summer of 1934. It is a conscript army in being, and of something like this size, that Hitler has partially released from the restrictions of secrecy, by announcing the conscription of 550,000 men.

Let us take next the "surprising revelation" that Germany possesses an air force as large as Britain's. The *Times* Paris correspondent reported in 1932:

> That the German factories produce fighting and bombing machines complete to the point of fitting in machine-guns and bombing aparatus is admitted by the German air authorities themselves. That they construct on a large scale types of fighters and scouting planes is equally evident. It is pointed out that the H.D.38, H.D.41 and H.D.43 of the Heinkel firm are classed as such in the British works of reference. (*Times* December 10, 1932.)

The British Government not only knew of these planes; it gave permits for British aero-engines to be exported for use in some of them. (When questioned on this, it explained that there was "no reason to believe" that the engines were not for civilian flying.) The British secret service, which before the war and during it knew most things about the German forces (including the most secret naval codes), is not likely to have overlooked a single German aircraft factory.

There can be no question, then, of accepting any part of the National (and Labour Party) explanation of the present phase of the arms race as due to a British "discovery" of German rearmament, or to decisions by the German government to rearm. Britain took a long lead in the change from slow and secret to open and rapid rearmament, a lead of many months. In so far as there is a single main cause of the present arms race, it is the British decision to begin open rearmament.

Let us note, for example, the position of air rearmament *before* Hitler's announcement of his air strength:

> "Every aircraft factory in this country at present," stated the *Aeroplane* on February 20, 1935, "is either already turning out masses of aeroplanes for the new squadrons and for the increased reserve . . . . or else the factories are tooling up for production—which means that new machine tools and special apparatus are being installed—or else negotiations are

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going on between the manufacturers and the Contracts Department at the Air Ministry."

"If war were to break out to-morrow," stated the *Aeroplane* on March 13, 1935, "the effective personnel of the Air Force, pilots and mechanics alike, would be doubled or trebled within a week. The existing squadrons of 9 machines each would automatically become squadrons of 18 machines. . . . . In the R.A.F. reserve there are 2,250 pilots, and there are some thousands who have done their time in the reserve."

That was the position, openly published to the world, before the rest of the world came into the open arms race. From that time onwards the pace grew hotter.

How hot the pace has become was shown particularly clearly in April. It is safe to say that most of our readers will have forgotten already many of the items in this incomplete list (date as reports in the *Times*) :

April 1 : Officially announced in London : Hitler had stated that German air force equals British.

April 2. German anti-aircraft units reorganised under air ministry.

April 3. General Denain : Air re-equipment "was now being expanded and accelerated . . . the number of bombing machines in the French air force was now multiplied by three." M. Flandin : Frontier fortifications now manned with troops.

April 8. French retain 60,000 conscripts, due for discharge, in army.

April 10. Sir Philip Sassoon : "The Royal Air Force has still a margin of superiority over the German air force. Nevertheless, the rate of Germany's air development is such as to cause H.M. Government grave concern." German claim to 35 per cent. of British naval tonnage published ; also French law on civilian "defence against air attacks."

April 12. Paris police advise civilians to buy gas masks. Mussolini : We intend to keep 600,000 men under arms.

April 13. Transport of British 1st and 2nd Divisions to be fully mechanised in a year.

April 16. Budget : service estimates increased by £10,539,000. U.S.A. "defence" outlay raised to $1,063,098,000 (over £200,000,000) ; this includes much "relief works" expenditure.

April 17. Home Office sets up department for precautions against air raids.

April 29. German decision to build 12 submarines revealed.

April 30. U.S.A. begins naval manœuvres, to include 160 warships, 450 'planes.

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May 1. U.S. President denies suggestions made by U.S. generals that preparations need to be made for bombing Canada and other British possessions.

May 2. Expansion of Australian "defence" programme announced.

May 3. Runciman: Government will not stop export of British aero-engines to Germany. MacDonald: "Government are already taking steps for the further and accelerated extension of the Royal Air Force," needed to implement Baldwin's pledge of "no inferiority with Germany," Goering: "We have expanded technical and industrial capacity to its extreme limit, to create the air arm at a single blow."

These three quotations, in our last entry, so perfectly characterise the political and technical position that it is not necessary to carry the diary further; new entries could be made for each day (decision to double the Japanese air force, Mussolini's further mobilisations, gradual announcement of greater and greater acceleration of R.A.F. expansion, etc.). In these three quotations we have the "guts" of the whole affair. The British striking forces are being swiftly increased because of a German "threat," yet Messrs. Armstrong-Siddeley may sell their excellent engines to General Goering because (in Runciman's words) these engines are "manufactured for civil aeroplanes." They are, but taking the world as a whole, they are probably fitted in more service machines than civilian ones.

As for the real political reason for this increase in armaments, look again at the quotation about the Army on page 412. Soviet Russia used to be, for military purposes, "an Asiatic state with a comparatively low standard of equipment." It is now fully up to European levels of military technique. British imperialism, recognising this, alters the army, doubles, perhaps trebles her air force. And this air force is taught that "the next really big job of the R.A.F. will be to go to Germany to help in staving off a Russian invasion." (*Aeroplane*, February 13, 1935.)

It is for this unchanged purpose that the change has been made to open and rapid rearmament, a race in which Britain leads and in which Britain encourages Germany ("some hundreds of very good British and American aero-motors have been [exported] for the German Air Force" *Aeroplane*, May 8, 1935). While this purpose remains unchanged under all the pacts, the agreements as to new navies or new air forces, no Socialist should be deceived for a moment by the Government plea that it is arming for the defence of "democracy" against Fascism.

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THE SURRENDER OF THE LABOUR PARTY

By JOHN STRACHEY

IN politics honesty, I am afraid, is by no means always the best policy. But when a group of leaders surrender the most vital interests of their followers it does sometimes happen that they damage their own political careers also. And this seems to have happened in the case of the British Labour leaders' present surrender to the principles, general policy, and now the detailed plans, of the National Government.

The change for the worse in the position and prospects of the Labour Party which has occurred during the last six months is striking. Up till about February of this year the immediate electoral prospects of the Labour Party seemed excellent. Almost every by-election resulted in a National Government defeat, and the return of the Labour candidate. It seemed clear that when the general election took place the Labour Party would either receive an absolute majority or would, at any rate, become the majority party in the House of Commons and be called on to form the Government. The Tadpoles and Tapers were already sharing out the major Ministries between the various leaders. There was considerable rubbing of hands as the succulent prospects of office reappeared over the horizon.

To-day, when the Labour leaders survey their prospects, they perceive a sad change. It is evident, both from recent by-elections and from every other political indication, that the Labour Party's chances of winning enough seats at the forthcoming general election to enable it to form the Government have receded almost to the vanishing point. The Labour vote seems to be running considerably below the level of 1929. The National Government has suddenly and rapidly reconquered a large part of its lost ground. The leaders of the Labour Party are resigning themselves to another five years of opposition.

How are we to account for this sudden and sharp revolution of fortunes? I do not think that the question is in doubt. The National Government led by Mr. Baldwin has utterly out-manœuvered the leaders of the Labour Party. Mr. Baldwin has been able to turn to his advantage a situation which might quite as easily have led to exactly opposite political consequences. The British political situation is now, it is clear, almost wholly dominated by foreign affairs in general, and by the imminence of a war in Europe in particular. It might have been supposed that this sudden revelation of the fact that capitalism is indeed leading us to a new

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shambles, as every Socialist has always said it would, must greatly improve the position of the Labour Party and damage that of the capitalist parties. But in order for it to have this effect, it would have been necessary for the leaders of the Labour Party to lead an open and, in essence, a revolutionary opposition to the war preparation and nationalist propaganda of the Government ; and they have been thoroughly unwilling to do this.

Their unwillingness has proved Mr. Baldwin's opportunity. It has enabled him to rally public opinion to the National Government. He has skilfully used the fact of German rearmament, which has been made possible by the financing of the Nazi Government by the British capitalists in general, and in particular by the Bank of England, as a justification for a gigantic programme of British rearmament. He has invented the hitherto unknown celebration of a " Silver Jubilee," as a great piece of imperialist propaganda. In a word, he has "put over," almost unchallenged by the opposition, the most gigantic imperialist manœuvre of modern times.

It is interesting to reflect on the considerations which must have been present in Mr. Baldwin's mind in preparing this move by which he has, at a stroke, restored the position of the Government and, it seems, insured himself another five years of office. He must have calculated that the Labour Party and Trade Union Movement would have either to oppose the rearmament programme and the Jubilee stunt, in which case they could be branded as traitors to their country, or they would have to refrain from any serious opposition to the manœuvre, in which case they would simply fade out of the picture. In either case Mr. Baldwin would gain an advantage, but we may be assured that he fervently hoped that the Labour leaders, intimidated by his Nationalist propaganda, would fail to challenge his programme. For whatever might have been the temporary liability, all the opposition to the imperialist plans of the Government by the organised working-class movement would have been an intensely serious matter for the British capitalist class. Indeed it would have gone far to cripple their war plans. Thus, we may believe that Mr. Baldwin would hardly have undertaken this whole manœuvre had he not felt confident that the Labour leaders would fail to put up any serious opposition to it.

And Mr. Baldwin knew his men. The men who have real power in the Labour Party and Trades Union Movement to-day, notably Mr. Herbert Morrison and Sir Walter Citrine, pride themselves on nothing so much as being practical men. They never tire of telling us how shrewd and sensible they are. They pride themselves on their tactical ability, their power to out-manœuvre their opponents by a clever gagging of public opinion. They are forever contrasting their own shrewdness with what is, they say, the lamentable political stupidity, the visionary

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" impossibleness," of the Communist Party and the revolutionary movement generally. It must have been clear to Mr. Baldwin from the beginning that such men would not dare to oppose the blast of Nationalist propaganda which was loosed this spring. For to do so would have, no doubt, involved standing up to an unprecedented campaign of calumny from the whole capitalist press, a campaign which for the moment might quite well have carried sections of public opinion with it. Mr. Morrison and Sir Walter did not dream of facing such a prospect. They felt sure that the shrewd, clever, practical thing to do was to bow before the storm and offer no serious opposition to the Government's schemes ; and thus they fell headlong into Mr. Baldwin's trap.

For the event has proved that these little men of the Labour Movement were but children in the hands of the really experienced politicians of the British capitalist class. The Labour leaders were out-manœuvred in a couple of months. They had utterly failed to realise that if they made no opposition in principle to the Government's imperialist drive, the public would inevitably prefer the real imperialists to the rather shoddy substitute imperialists of the Labour benches. If it was necessary to arm, and even the Labour Party did not, it turned out, contest the point, public opinion naturally came to the conclusion that it was necessary to arm adequately. The Labour Party was left with literally nothing to offer excepting a programme of inadequate armaments.

The above interpretation of the disastrous change in the Labour Party's fortunes which has taken place in recent months seems to me to be true as far as it goes. But so far we have looked at the matter on the superficial level of political manœuvring only. Moreover, to do so is, in a sense, unfair to the Labour leaders. In one sense, Mr. Morrison and Sir Walter had no alternative. The truth of the matter is that in the present world situation of capitalism, the struggle of class forces has now become so sharp that no inch of standing room is left between swallowing whole the imperialist policy—however disastrous the political consequences of that act may be—and taking up a basically revolutionary policy of opposition. All serious opposition to the Government has, in other words, become a revolutionary act to-day (and by this fact we may judge how far along the road to war we have already travelled). But if this is the real alternative, such men as Mr. Morrison and Sir Walter had in fact no choice. For them the very idea of revolutionary opposition was of course inconceivable. Social Democrats invariably support their respective capitalist governments to the very end, even if such support involves their own political extinction. (The example of Braun, Severing and the Prussian Social-Democrat Ministers proves this fact to us.) Moreover, the British capitalists, wiser and less hard-pressed than their German colleagues, can still offer the Labour leaders many a compensation for the decline in the political fortunes of their party. Sir Walter

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Citrine receives his supremely well-deserved knighthood and Mr. Morrison is offered a place in the National Government.

R. P. D. has exposed in these columns, and in detail, the frightful consequences, both for the peace of the world and for the workers' struggle against capitalism, of the present policy of the British Labour Party. It is undeniable, and undenied, as he has shown, even by the continental Social-Democrats, that the failure of the British Labour Party to offer any opposition whatever to the policy of the National Government is the greatest asset which the Nazi Government possesses to-day. If the basic and avowed Fascist scheme of the joint German-Polish-Japanese attack upon the Soviet Union materialises, it will have been made possible by the surrender of the British Labour Party more than by any other single factor. The fear of Germany expressed by Mr. Baldwin and the other British imperialist leaders is by no means feigned. They are desperately afraid of a renascent German imperialism. But it is this very fear which, if they are given complete freedom of manœuvre by the absence of any opposition, will induce them to try to " shunt " German aggression from West to East. The British capitalists are still hesitating between this scheme and the safer, though to them less attractive, policy of joining the Soviet-French-Czech block against all Nazi aggression. Had the British Government been faced by a serious opposition from the Labour Party and official Trades Union Movement, they would already have been forced into association with the Soviet-French-Czech system, just as the French Government itself was forced into it by the United Front opposition of the French working class. It is not, however, the purpose of this article to attempt to consider the world situation which is covered so fully month by month in these columns.

It is worth observing what has happened to the Left Wing of the Labour Party in this situation. It would be hardly an exaggeration to say that the Socialist League, Sir Stafford Cripps and the other " Left Wingers " of the Labour Party, who cut such a dash upon the English political stage even six months ago, have now faded away altogether. They have become the silent and, no doubt, depressed supporters of the Morrison-Citrine capitulation. And this was inevitable, for as we have seen, there was no possibility of finding even the remnant of a middle position between this capitulation and direct revolutionary anti-war struggle carried on, on a United Front basis, by the revolutionary elements. And our bold " Left Wingers " reject such United Front struggles just as decisively as do Mr. Morrison and Sir Walter. Having no glimmer of an understanding of the world situation, they see in the comparative weakness and inadequacy of the revolutionary forces in Great Britain, not a terrible danger for the working class which must be remedied at all costs. They see in the inadequacy of the revolutionary forces, which is all too true, only a good reason for supporting at every critical

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turn, and however complainingly, the basic policy of the official Labour leaders.

It is interesting to speculate on what the future of the British Labour Party will be. It seems possible that the situation in Britain has now reached the stage in which it is impossible for the Social Democrats to take office. It may be that the future rôle of the Labour Party will be permanently that of His Majesty's loyal opposition. For when the external and internal difficulties of a capitalist system have become sufficiently grave, the capitalist class simply dare not hand over office, even temporarily, to the Social Democrat leaders. It is not that the capitalist statesmen have the slightest doubt of the perfect loyalty and devotion to capitalism of the Labour leaders. It is rather that these leaders are not, with the best will in the world, sufficiently intelligent to cope with the difficulties which beset the system ; thus they cannot be trusted with the helm when the wind has risen. But if it may well be that the Labour Party will never again form the Administration, yet this does not of course mean that individual Labour leaders will not become Cabinet Ministers. An appropriate number of seats will no doubt be reserved for them in future War Cabinets. They have no reason to despair of touching once again the seals of office.

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MANCHESTER AND WAR

By W. BLACKBURN (A.E.U.)

THE Government's decisions of recent weeks to make enormous increases in the armed strength of the country bring out very sharply the prominence of Manchester as a centre of war industries.

In the last war, it is true to say, the vast majority of Manchester workers were on war work. All the engineering factories which previously had been engaged on the production of innocent automobiles, machinery, and so forth, were switched over to army transports, etc. Chemical factories producing dyestuffs and chemicals for the textile and other industries became enormous producers of poison gases and explosives.

Clothing factories, previously making raincoats, mackintoshes and suits, turned out uniforms, great-coats, ground-sheets and other items necessary for the equipment of the various forces on land and sea.

Since that time and its experiences it is not difficult to recognise the part that Manchester plays in the preparations for war.

The great aeroplane works of A. V. Roe's is busy making bombing planes, presumably contributing to the carrying through of Baldwin's programme of 1,500 planes.

Manchester City Authorities are planning a new airport at Ringway which, ostensibly a civil airport, provides further facilities for the carrying through of the National Government's war plans.

Metro Vickers, of Trafford Park, is engaged on production that is innocent enough at the moment, but it is a matter of common knowledge that this factory becomes a war factory at a moment's notice.

The great plants belonging to the Imperial Chemical Industries, at Blackley (formerly Levinstein's and later the British Dyestuffs Corporation) are known, not only because of our experience in the last war, but also because the fact has been announced, to be capable of switching over immediately to war purposes. This combine owns other works in the district, including the Broughton Copper Works which is a most important war factory.

In addition, there are in Manchester a whole host of chemical factories more or less independent, not least among which is the Clayton Aniline Co. All of them are important, nay, essential, to the carrying out of an up-to-date war. Mention might be made here of the fact that within

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a short distance from Manchester at Widnes, Runcorn, St. Helens, there is centred a very considerable chemical industry of key-importance from the point of view of war.

Similarly, Manchester is immediately surrounded by a ring of towns all of which were engaged on war production either in the engineering or textile industries.

Huge quantities of surgical dressings were supplied to the War Office from Bury and other towns ; armaments were manufactured at Oldham, Stockport, Rochdale, Wigan, etc., as well as in the mighty metal works of Manchester itself.

It is not possible to form any clear idea of the number of people actually engaged on work of a war character at the present time. Nor is it possible to gather accurate information as to which firms are working, directly or indirectly, for the War Office, just as it has not been possible to obtain definite information as to the transport of munitions on railways in Manchester and Lancashire. On the latter point many railwaymen know of freight whose nature has been, to say the least, suspicious and whose final destination remained a closely guarded secret.

But if it is not possible to calculate the quantity of war materials issuing from Manchester and the close ring of towns round it, it is possible to say quite definitely that every engineering factory, every chemical works, every clothing mill, and a large number of cotton factories are potential producers of war materials. That being the case, the workers in these factories, together with the railwaymen and transport workers are keenly interested in the preparations for war and have a big responsibility in the struggle against it.

In this connection it is interesting to glance at the position of Manchester in relation to the fight against war. There always has been—since the war of 1914-18—a strong anti-war feeling among Manchester workers. Unfortunately there has been for the most part no organisational expression of this opposition. The pacifist organisations were dominated for the most part by the dead-weight of official pacifism and failed to attract the workers.

About two years ago the Manchester and District Anti-War Council was formed at a conference at which over 90 organisations were represented. This Council has, in the past two years, won for itself a wide recognition as the leader of the struggle in which the worker with a wage and the one with a " salary " (and those without either), together with the student and middle class person, honestly opposed to war, can unite in common effort, regardless of religious or political differences, to struggle against the war makers.

It has about 50 organisations affiliated to it, including Trade Union branches, Co-operative Guilds, Churches, and many pacifist organisations. These organisations have joined the Anti-War Council because of their

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conviction that only the united effort of the people in struggle against war preparations can prevent the carrying out of the war makers' plans. In addition to its affiliations and its very large body of individual supporters, the Manchester and District Anti-War Council receives support from a still larger number of Trade Union branches, Co-operative Guilds, Labour Parties and peace bodies. Its speakers have led discussions in these branches and many of them have co-operated in the showing of the now famous Manchester Anti-War Exhibition in some twenty places throughout the district.

It is significant that Manchester is the town chosen by the War Office as the next for a black-out and silent test. This blatant piece of war propaganda and preparation is to be organised by the League of Frontiersmen, a militarist, semi-fascist organisation, appointed to this task by the Government.

Naturally, the workers of Manchester will not take this lying down. Preparations are in hand for a vigorous campaign against the black-out, to ensure that the warmongers receive no assistance, but rather the utmost opposition from the Manchester workers.

In this campaign the Anti-War Council is playing a leading part, and its influence should prove strong enough to prevent the Government succeeding in its latest war stunt.

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THE T.U.C. AND THE COTTON INDUSTRY

[*A Local Official of an important Weavers' Association made the following statement, on the T.U.C. Plan, to a* LABOUR MONTHLY *representative.*]

I THINK that the Trades Union Congress Plan is our old friend "Cotton Control Boards" dressed up in a new suit. Or, to be more exact, it differs from that scheme in details but is the same on the main points. The pet scheme of the textile trade union leaders—Cotton Control Boards—was, in fact, nothing but a proposal for a huge capitalist monopoly in the textile trade ; the same is true of the T.U.C. Public Corporation.

The T.U.C. approves the measures of reorganisation in the spinning section. Now this shows the way the wind is blowing. How anybody calling himself a Socialist can approve of the "reorganisation" schemes of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation is quite beyond me. The spinners and piecers suffered as a result of the "plans" of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation. As you know, many mills were closed down and 50,000 unemployed spinners and piecers would certainly not approve the attempt at reorganisation in the spinning side. At present the spinning employers are scrapping more mills and spindles and getting £2,000,000 compensation. But there is nothing for the workers.

Many textile trade union leaders suffer from a bee in the bonnet, that a capitalist trust is better than a private firm. They believe that the "big capitalist" is a good capitalist and that the "little men" are wrong 'uns ; these latter are the deadweight which must be removed. The point is, of course, that all the capitalists are a deadweight and industry can't be socialised until they are removed.

The acid test of any scheme of socialisation is just what will the workers get out of it ? About this the T.U.C. is not very definite ; hours, wage advances, are all left in the air ; but the plan promises the employers in advance compensation and security.

So the folk who have burdened the industry for years are to continue to burden it by drawing a pension for their disservice. More than that, the T.U.C. invites these same people to appoint "specialists" to direct the "socialist" industry. The Public Corporation will be drawn from those who have ruined the trade, with some trade union officials who will give up their trade union posts and advise the corporation on how to avoid disputes.

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This Public Corporation, composed of appointed officials who cannot be recalled or removed by the people, will " reorganise " the trade. The officials will draw fat salaries. The owners of the " deadweight " enterprises will get compensation. When these concerns are closed down what is to become of the workers ? The T.U.C. does not say, but it indicates that the workers will be asked to suffer again and again " in order that a greater share of the world markets may be obtained."

The object of the T.U.C. Plan is to continue the cut-throat competition with Japan and other countries for the world trade. The T.U.C. claim to be better business men than the capitalists; where the foolish inefficient capitalists have failed the T.U.C. will succeed ! The only snag is that the Japanese and other foreign competitors will " reorganise," continue the competition, and the wages and conditions of all workers will go down.

Since 1921 the weavers alone have lost 9s. 5d. in the £ through wage cuts. Each time the employer claimed that it would mean " a greater share in the world market." But these wage cuts in Lancashire were followed by wage cuts abroad and everywhere the workers have suffered and, as a consequence, the markets are less. Any fight for the world markets will continue this downward movement of the workers' conditions. Lancashire gets less trade, not more. It will continue to get less until the Lancashire workers and Indian people get such improvements in their life standards that they can afford to buy more cloth. The T.U.C. Plan says nothing about this.

For these reasons I think the T.U.C. Plan has nothing in common with Socialism and is, like the Cotton Control Scheme, nothing but a plan for the formation of a capitalist trust. This is brought home to all thinking trade unionists when they study the part that the trade unions have to play in the Plan. As an old Socialist and active trade unionist for many years I have always considered that the trade unions would play a big part in the Socialist Control of Industry. But the task set us in the T.U.C. Plan, is to prevent any disputes in the industry.

Textile workers in particular have suffered from the policy of arbitration. Three wages cuts have been brought about by this means. The trade unions have been seriously weakened by these wage reductions and by arbitration. A strengthening of this system means a weakening of the trade union movement.

As a result of the legalisation of Wages Agreements which is now being brought in, many textile workers are questioning the value of the trade union movement. They say, " If the law and Ministry of Labour will enforce the payment of wages then why have a trade union ? " Of course they are wrong ; but the reaction can be appreciated when every experience of legalisation has gone against the workers and the present agreement which is to be legalised, also gives wage cuts to a large section. Hundreds

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have left the trade unions because of the dissatisfaction with relying upon arbitration machinery instead of building and strengthening the trade union movement.

By continuing this policy of restricting the action of the trade unions the T.U.C. Plan robs the trade union movement of its real purpose—the defence of the workers and the danger is that the unions will be so weakened by this policy that they will decline.

Less than a year ago the same people who drafted this Plan were praising the heroism of the Dorchester Labourers. What would those pioneers think of a plan which proposed to martial the trade union movement behind a Public Corporation, put fetters on the unions as they were fettered in their day by the capitalists and landowners ; and rob the unions of a fighting policy for which the Dorchester men sacrificed years of freedom ?

Strong unionism is yet the only hope of improvement for the Lancashire workers, and it will never come by putting all our apples in one basket, relying upon Legalisation and Arbitration Courts to improve things. If we build strong unions pledged to fight the employers we can enforce good agreements and the legalisation of them. But without strong and active trade unionism arbitration is a weapon of the employers.

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A CONFERENCE on Trade Union Problems and Policy

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Great interest is being taken by trade unionists throughout the country in the discussion on "Trade Union Problems and Policy" that has been proceeding in the LABOUR MONTHLY in the last few months.

In response to numerous requests, the LABOUR MONTHLY has decided to convene a great conference for London and the South of England on "Trade Union Problems and Policy."

The Conference will discuss such problems as:

(1) The Trade Unions and Rationalisation.

(2) The Trade Unions and United Action to increase Wages.

(3) The Trade Unions and Democracy.

(4) The Trade Unions and International Unity against War.

THE CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN

THE BERMONDSEY TOWN HALL ON AUGUST 24th and 25th.

The circular convening the Conference is going out to all trade union branches, and all trade unionists who are interested in the clarification of those important questions, should ensure that delegates are sent to this important conference.

Trade unionists whose branches have not received the circular by mid-July should communicate with the LABOUR MONTHLY, at 7 John Street, London, W.C.1.

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A Discussion on Trade Union Problems and Policy—IV.[1]

[*Readers' attention is particularly directed to the announcement on the opposite page of a Conference on the issues raised by this Discussion to be held at the end of August. This Conference, as we state, has been called in response to a widespread request for a further opportunity to continue this Discussion started in April, which we will have to close, at any rate in its present form, with next month's issue. All Trade Union readers are urged to make this Conference the greatest possible success and see that without fail their organisation is represented at the Conference by a strong and representative Delegation.*]

BELOW is printed a further selection of contributions to the discussion commenced in the April issue on Trade Union Problems and policy. To guide the discussion a series of six questions have been drawn up which will be found below.

Any trade union reader who has not yet contributed, and would like still to do so, is urged to send in his contribution (not more than 500 words in length) to reach the LABOUR MONTHLY *not later than July 13th, for consideration for the August issue. In signing the reply please add the name of your union with official position if any.*

1. At the present time many Trade Unions are presenting demands for increased wages, and at the Trades Union Congress last September the Chairman, Mr. A. Conley, spoke of the need for co-ordination of the Trade Union forces. Do you believe such co-ordination is necessary? If so, what in your opinion are the first steps which should be taken towards that objective?
2. What in your opinion should be the line of trade union policy in the present economic situation? What should be the demands of the active workers in the Trade Unions? Where a demand has been tabled for an advance in wages, what in your opinion are the steps which should be taken within the factories and the Unions in order to achieve that demand?
3. What is your opinion of the circular of the Trades Union Congress General Council (on "disruptive movements"), proposing the revision of trade union constitutions with a view to excluding militant trade unionists from election to delegate or official positions? How will it effect trade union democracy and the building up of the Unions?

[1]A list of previous contributions is given at the end of this instalment.

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4. What in your opinion should be the attitude of the Unions to such schemes of rationalisation as are being suggested for a number of industries, i.e., the Cotton Control Board, compulsory amalgamation in mining, etc. ?

5. What concrete steps do you think it is possible for the Trade Unions to take in order to prevent the development of Fascism in this country ?

6. What in your opinion should be the attitude of the Unions (a) as economic organs and (b) as affiliated bodies to the Labour Party towards the proposals for the formation of a United Front against Fascism and War which the Communist Party and the I.L.P. have made to the Labour Party, in view of the decision of the Labour and Socialist International to allow its affiliated sections freedom of action in this respect ?

It should be noted that the answers are individual answers and do not necessarily commit the organisation or part of the organisation of which the contributors are officers or members.

From a Woman Trade Union Staff Worker

(1) Co-ordination is absolutely essential. Unity is the only strength of the workers, and capitalists have never been backward in playing off one group against another. The determination of Union negotiators to protect their *own* members, if necessary, at the expense of others, natural and inevitable under present conditions, is a dangerous waste of strength. In my opinion the essential thing is to get away from the obsolete tradition of craft distinctions : (i) By the strengthening of local trades councils where a better perspective is possible than in the separate trade union branches. (ii) By moving towards union organisation like that of the Transport and General Workers, where regional and national committees help to develop understanding between different trade groups. (iii) The T.U.C. should act as central liaison authority, keeping all informed of activities over the whole industrial front ; but this action from above cannot be effective unless coupled with those already mentioned.

(2) (*a*) By (i) consolidation and co-ordination, as indicated above. (ii) Since few further " concessions " can be expected from capitalism, a definite programme of minimum standards should be demanded : when employers, economists, or governmental apologists protest that it is impossible to achieve this, the lesson should be driven home on the platform, in the press, and in the conference room, *that it is impossible only under the existing economic system.* (iii) The education of their members in the facts of the economic situation to-day. Clearly we must admit that, short-sighted and vacillating as many leaders are, they are on the whole more advanced than the bulk of their membership. It is unjust and foolish to blame leaders for weak and gradualist action on specific points, for they have behind them a membership preponderantly opportunist and narrow of vision. But it is both just and pertinent to demand that they *tell their members we are nearing the end of compromise and concession, and must face the choice between a retrogressive standard of life and a fundamental change in the economic system.*

(*b*) (i) To work towards co-ordination. (ii) To insist that their fellow members—particularly the younger generation—face facts and abandon their present Micawberish attitude.

(*c*) Once a demand is tabled, compromise should be avoided because it weakens confidence, both within and without the unions : every effort should be made to

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concentrate general attention on such demands, and the reasons for them—"limelight" here has the double advantage of exhibiting and increasing strength. But the hasty breaking of agreements, unless the reasons are strong, *and are clearly stated*, is disastrous.

(3) In my opinion this circular is short-sighted and indicates a tragic failure to face realities. I think its main effect will be to stimulate discussion and clarify the position of the bulk of the trade union members and the "disruptive movements" themselves. For the rest, one remembers the results of the list of "proscribed organisations" issued by the Labour Party some years ago.

(4) Rationalisation is unavoidable and must be done after the achievement of socialism, if not before. I think it unwise for the Unions to seek to obstruct it, or hold aloof, but at the same time, without vigilance, they run a very real danger of crippling entanglement. In my opinion they should hold a watching brief, and if necessary take an active part with these ends always in view: (i) The protection of the position of the workers in the immediate future. (ii) The avoidance of waste and bolstering-up (at the expense of the community) of industries which are obsolete or unprofitable in the real sense of the word, since rationalised industries must ultimately form part of a socialised economy.

(5) The concrete step which trade unions can and must take against fascism is the propagation of socialism: fascism only grows out of capitalism where socialists are afraid or unready to act. The unions must choose a programme and make it clear, to their members and everyone else, that they mean to secure it, and can do so only through socialism. In my opinion an "anti-fascist" attitude is not sufficient. What is needed is a pro-socialist stand.

(6) As economic organs the unions have neither the right nor the ability to involve their members here *until they are so informed as to be able to make a deliberate choice*. As affiliated bodies to the Labour Party their task is again one of education: they must see that the membership clearly understands the economic facts behind these problems. Until this is achieved, not even a change of leadership can have a permanent and deep-rooted effect.

Finally, I believe the most urgent and inescapable of trade union problems is that of telling members the truth about the economic position. We have to throw off the shackles of capitalism, but we cannot hope to do so while we have so many trade unionists who are never seen in the branch room, who seek immediate results without regard to ultimate ends, and who regard their union as a species of automatic machine, into which they put contributions, and from which they extract specific "benefits" without further obligation or effort on their part; or so many officials who get caught up in the machinery of negotiating and "doing what they can" until, quite incapable of seeing the wood for the trees, they waste, on compromising over details, energies which ought to be devoted to establishing principles.

ELLEN MCCULLOUGH (*Transport and General Workers' Union*, 1/128 (*Staff*) *Branch*).

From a Tramwayman

(1) The co-ordination of trade unions is necessary on vital issues of public importance, *i.e.*, War, Fascism, Strikes, etc. Co-ordination can be brought about by the United Front governing Head Office tactics. Increased wages on all, except those below £3 per week produce a class of contented, self-satisfied, apathetic and brainless (even to social ambition) producers. The effect of increased wages must tend to raise prices under the capitalistic system and raised prices nullify increased wages, also it means that the 40 per cent. of the unemployed have to rub along on the awful rubbish that the shops sell them. Thus, the unemployed and lowest paid worker gets deeper in the mire on the result of each wage advance. The wage advance is a

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belated allowance for intensified labour and the whole idea seems to be to separate the employed producer from the unemployed producer by this social distinction.

(2) Trade union policy should aim at (*a*) shorter hours, (*b*) more employees where systematic overtime is worked, (*c*) pensions, (*d*) reduction in share interest, (*e*) where the cry of bad times is made by the exploiters, blandly inform them that they must reduce their salaries and amenities and if, in the face of this, they refuse—then strike before the producers as a body accept any reduction. These aims should be made as the thin end of the wedge towards socialism and equality. Trade Union policy should aim at the control of the Union itself, control of the officials, level the wages and conditions of the workers in their industry, pensions, holidays in the summer, abolition of the spectator class who is merely a snake, educate the worker and aim for democracy. Each demand must be taken on its own grounds, because under capitalism we cannot extract blood from a stone ; a wage advance is not so very important as some would have us think, because it leaves others high and dry—which seems selfish.

(3) Trade Unionism, which originally was built on democracy and militancy to the extent of dismissal and transportation of its pioneer members, has developed through the years into a veritable capitalistic institution with its definitely middle class officials. The militants have long realised this, thus we have another battle of producer against a new breed of superior velvet-coated workers, who have shaken off the factory dust, for ever to be looked after for the remainder of their lives by the actual members in the hope that the officials really will sometime act as a buffer between the producers and exploiters. Except under the laws of extreme Fascism, no member should be excluded from any office, if elected. It is a storm within our constitution. I do not know of any trade union democracy at present, nor have I experienced anything but the faintest tinge of democracy. All I can see is a violent drive towards an impartial dictatorship by our union secretaries and, although they might not look at it in this light, the disease is in an advanced condition.

(4) The Cotton Control Board won't do the workers outside the industry any good because of the high prices ; it might create a section of satisfied cotton operatives, but what about those left outside ? The only solution again is the abolition of the system. Although I lived 10 years recently amongst colliers my view is limited, but I favour amalgamations, standardisation and eventually nationalisation.

(5) At present none, because they practice Fascism from their own headquarters. The militants' demonstrations do not appear to do any outward good. Let's weed our own garden first and have a clean up.

(6) Trade unions should and must hold to economics (the world's housekeeping) in all their dealings because the employers have floored us too many times on the economic situation and rational public opinion seems to be based on it.

W. JENKINSON (*Transport and General Workers' Union*, 1/358 *Hammersmith Trams branch*).

From a Yorkshire Miner

(1) Yes, all unions should be co-ordinated, not only for the purpose of protecting their members on wages and conditions of labour, but to take over ownership and control.

The first steps necessary are to consult all branches in each industry which you are expecting to join forces, stating the items with power to add to be discussed by all members whose views would be compared, at the expired time, the best expressions to be selected and tabled in suitable form with a further discussion allowing for weak points to be found and criticised, setting out the results as applicable to meet the boss with power to demand a satisfactory reply. This, failing to meet with the desired result at a given time, the wheels of industry should cease at a specified date.

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(2) The line of trade union policy to-day should be to make preparation for an increase in wages, shorter hours with no wage reductions, the abolition of piece rates with a fixed rate; where machines have been introduced all to receive a wage above the maximum piece rate as a day wage ; this would minimise fatal accidents ; otherwise compensation to be paid at the same amount as received when working full time ; each district to retain a qualified specialist to counter the indemnity company ; two weeks holiday with pay each year is long overdue ; where 1s. per week contributions are paid, a 50 per cent, reduction to 6d. per week must be considered enough with the low wage received by members to-day.

Active workers should see that the grievances of the workers are stated, and they must harness the workers ready for the struggle, preparing them and gaining their confidence, keeping in mind the Great Betrayal of 1926.

(3) It was a cowardly mistake and one that takes some swallowing. From whatever angle you look at it, how anything could be thought to be got from it makes one wonder why it was ever instigated. If it had for its object to expel the " disruptive movements " it has been a success to the other side. But who are these they dub as disrupters ? They pay the union fees, keep the members together, stand up and face the issues in a struggle and gain the members' confidence with the result that members join up again who have left the union in disgust. With this put into effect it will be possible to steam-roller any policy through what few unions may exist. Democracy will be a thing of the past, and the unions will belong to the company.

(4) The unions should oppose such schemes of rationalisation, control boards, etc. This is vitally important because rationalisation, control boards, etc., will bring further hardships on the workers in the way of speeding-up, accidents, more unemployment, greater mental strain for those at work, less wages per man power. More profits, more production in less time taken up for the employer.

(5) The trade unions, I think, should call all areas of unions together in each industry with a definite policy to declare a General Strike in the event of Fascism becoming a danger in this country. It is to be hoped the workers understand that Fascism is not bumped off into oblivion ; they are preparing behind the scenes with assistance from the " National Government," etc., more than some well known leaders of the workers appear to estimate. Would that our leaders were more alert in tackling the Blackshirts rather than by driving the sincere workers, I.L.P. and Communists, out of the labour movement by expulsion and excommunication, politically and industrially.

(6) As economic organs the unions should, in the event of Labour M.P.'s agents, or any paid servant of the union refusing to comply with the instructions issued, give them time to consider their position as to what they intend to do ; in the event of any wangling the position, they should dismiss them as of no further use and cease payments of affiliation fees from the date they were dismissed. As affiliated bodies to the Labour Party towards the proposals of the united front against Fascism and War with the Communist Party and I.L.P., the unions should line up with the United Front—the Labour Party will follow as sure as night follows day.

JOHN TAYLOR (*No. 327 Wath Main Branch, Yorkshire Mine Workers' Association*).

From a Railway Clerk's Delegate

The British Trades Union Congress during the past fifteen years has been fairly consistent in its reluctance to take definite steps to promote unity of action in the trade union world. On the great occasion in 1926, when it found itself impelled to move, its very success induced a panic and stampeded it into a return to pompous inactivity. The years since 1926 have given us a dreary record of retreat, excused by the T.U.C., first on

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the grounds that it was best to wait for a Labour Government, then that it was impolitic to embarrass a Labour Government by making demands for increased wages and risking industrial strife ; then again in the new conditions of post 1931 crisis on the plea that the workers have only themselves to blame for returning a National Government. Consequently, one must plead guilty to raised eyebrows and a slight incredulity as the first reaction to Mr. Conley's suggestion for co-ordination of activity.

But there will surely be no two opinions as to the desirability and necessity of co-ordination. The problem is, what type of co-ordination and under whose direction ? First, there is needed co-ordination of the demands themselves. A recent local experience has taught some of us the difficulties of application of two different rates, nationally established, in one shop. What should be the demands ? Basically, the demands that are made by the men and women in an industry. And since the pressure of demand comes from the rank and file, then co-ordination, both of the demands and of the manner of obtaining them, should be of the rank and file. Some measure of that co-ordination can be obtained by the association of unofficial, vigilant and militant committees in towns and districts, covering as far as possible the district council and committee areas of the unions themselves. But co-ordinated activity need not necessarily be entirely of an unofficial character. After all a trade union has been quite well defined as a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the condition of their working lives. The trade unions must be made to do their job. Rank and file opinion is well represented on the district committees and councils of most unions and should find expression in accordance with the militant members' demands, guided by the knowledge gained through association with militants in other unions and districts.

Possibly, Mr. Conley had in mind a unification of the demands of the trade unions—say an all-round 10 per cent. increase in wages and a forty-hour week. Unfortunately, many unions are pledged to agreements of certain duration. To break those agreements, to throw down the gauntlet to capitalism, to challenge it with the whole organised forces of the workers—that is not yet on the order of the day—certainly not on Mr. Conley's order !

The immediately possible and practicable is to pledge the trade union movement to support successively, morally and financially, the workers in each industry as their demands are put forward. Let capitalism be aware that the workers are united in support of their fellows. That means the practical application of a conception of trade union responsibility extending beyond craft and industry. It certainly calls for a definite, uncompromising attitude towards the handling of blackleg products and association with blacklegs. And here is one of the aspects of trade union activity where not only is co-ordination necessary, but where the machinery for it already exists. The Trades Councils themselves are co-ordinating bodies, comprising to quite a large degree rank and file trade unionists who are anxious to engage in more militant and active work. And who so well as the Trades Council delegates know the actual day-to-day happenings in the industrial world ; and who so keen in observation, in desire and readiness to remedy defects and weaknesses, to promote trade union activity, as those trade unionists whom the pontiffs of Transport House would exclude from official activity. Is Mr. Conley's first step towards co-ordination to be the shattering of a valuable co-ordination that does now exist ? And does the campaign commence with the cynical abandonment of all pretences of democracy in the trade unions ? Cannot the General Council of the T.U.C. appreciate the fact that its circular on so-called " disruptive movements " is in danger of provoking a serious disruption in the ranks of the movement ?

Did ever a trade union organiser demand of a prospective member that he should

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first join the Labour Party or at least swear adherence to the programme, policy and methods of that party? (Such methods would have effectively prevented the growth of the trade unions, the T.U.C. and the Labour Party itself!) The call for 100 per cent. organisation, the hopes of strength in unity, are vain if this splitting policy is not abandoned.

ROWLAND HILL (*Railway Clerks' Association Delegate, West Yorks Divisional Council, and Annual Conference.*)

From Tom Mann

The replies to the interesting questions submitted by the LABOUR MONTHLY will be conditioned by the degree of importance one attaches to the Trade Union Movement and the purpose it is destined to serve in the future. Ninety or more per cent. of the changes I am anxious to see brought about in society will follow immediately upon the transference of the control of all industry from capitalists who control for interest and profit, to workers who will control for general well-being use—not profit. Of all the agencies we have knowledge of that could most easily qualify for this control in my opinion the trade unions are far ahead of all others. Therefore I attach supreme importance to the growth of the trade unions; I therefore aim at complete organisation of *all workers*; I am aware that many unions do very little beyond attend to what we know as the friendly society benefits, and I know how small the attendance is at branches in the important unions, and how little is done in either an educational or an agitational direction.

Notwithstanding the relatively slow growth in numbers in recent years and the many obstacles that block the paths to progress I am convinced there is nothing can stop the way to speedy development, including the power to make changes of a drastic character—without which nothing counts—if those of us who really desire these changes show that we have the necessary tact and pertinacity. It is vital that young workers shall be made to understand that he or she *must join the union*. Regardless of views, join the the union. Those who are members must not declare there is no chance of doing useful work because of reactionary officials, even if that is so in some instances it will not continue so when the effort is made often enough and with good tact. Very little effort is made to qualify for being of genuine service to a union branch, and many who on occasion seek to submit and get carried, a resolution of importance, are not well-known members in the sense of having served the branch as an officer or shewn concern to be identified with the branch interests.

If a member is determined to be of use in his union he can find opportunities on almost any meeting of the branch. Even as the previous meeting's minutes are read an alert member can put useful questions as they are being discussed, and take part in the discussion. When the branch correspondence is read and discussed he can be attentive. When a district committee-man's report is given many chances are there to put intelligent and useful questions and make suggestions. When disputes are discussed, local or national, again a watchful member can, if he will, be in evidence, and with a few similar colleagues can help to shape the policy of the branch, and soon, with other branches of the society. Control of industry through the unions, and by the unions, is the policy to aim at. Imagine a tolerably well organised Shop Stewards' Movement, and these attentive at the branches and helping in the enrolment of new members regularly, constantly in friendly relationship with colleagues, and taking care to see that the branch is represented on the trades council, and listening carefully to the report of the delegate of the trades council, not worrying if some bumptiousness is shown on someone's part. I claim to have a fair knowledge of the movement, and I declare the great change of control by the workers and not by capitalists can be brought about in this way, and I know of no other way half as practical. The machinery and

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facilities already exist ; honest straightforward effort is all that is wanted.

No one will suppose that I am declaring that this is the only direction in which to work, but I do very definitely declare it is by far the best way to work and will give speediest results.

I set out to give replies to the six questions but find what may be considered the preliminaries so vital that, having occupied the space, I conclude as, although some will consider them as preliminaries, they are nevertheless essentials as I see the situation. Speed up the Shop Stewards' Movement and give constant attention to branch meetings.

TOM MANN.

From a Builders' Divisional Council Member

It entirely depends on what Mr. Conley meant by co-ordination ; if he meant further co-ordination to obtain better control in order to bind further the trade unions down to the policy of class collaboration, agreements, etc., then I do not agree. But if on the other hand co-ordination of forces is really meant, then agreement can be found with that expression. Steps towards this end can be taken with the fullest support by the union concerned in any industry where a dispute over wages is taking place ; full support by unions indirectly connected by taking sympathetic action, and the mobilisation of support by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress through its affiliated organisations.

The line of trade union policy should be to end the present policy of class collaboration and formulate one, more on the lines of the class struggle. All active workers should consistently press this demand home in their branches and should get resolutions passed embodying proposals for that end ; they should also see that members who stand for a militant policy are nominated and elected to positions in the unions.

The trade union circular to exclude militants and communists is a negation of trade union democracy and will cause more disruption than the disrupters they refer to but do not offer any concrete evidence to substantiate. Its effect, if put into operation, will be to eliminate the elements that are so vitally necessary for building and maintaining a live and virile trade union movement.

Trade unions should offer the most rigid opposition to any schemes for rationalisation unless the benefits resultant from them are fairly shared by the workers in the industry concerned and that compensation is made to those workers displaced by such schemes. Any body set up for this purpose should contain equal representation of workers from industry as well as trade union officials. The trade union movement should link itself up with the anti-fascist movement in this country and abroad (the International Anti-Fascist Committee). It should give the greatest encouragement to its branches, district committees, etc., to participate in any local effort to this end, and in the absence of any should initiate a movement for this purpose.

The attitude of the unions towards the United Front should be one of closest relation. Any attempt to sabotage the united front should be resisted by all members of trade unions. The very existence of the movement depends upon what action is taken in this direction now. Failure to do this will result in the development of fascism and ultimately to the smashing of the trade unions.

E. H. BRYAN (*Member London Divisional Council, Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers*).

From a Durham Checkweigher

(1) At the Trades Union Congress last September the Chairman, Mr. A. Conley, spoke of the need for co-ordination of the trade union forces. Now, as the leaders of the Trades Union Congress are pledged to a policy of " Peace in Industry " we must infer from the speech made by Mr. Conley that the co-ordination will be on the basis of " Peace in Industry." If this is so, and it seems quite obvious, I cannot see how

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any militant can be a party to creating illusions in the minds of the workers by participating in this so-called co-ordination. No, seeing that the present crisis is not only affecting Britain, but is world-wide in character, the duty of every loyal and active trade unionist is: let us organise the workers on the basis of the class struggle, therein lies the only hope of the workers bettering their conditions. It would be folly on our part to be led into the belief that this co-ordination would serve the purpose of the United Front.

(2) We must break with the old reformist ideology of peaceful negotiation and go forward with the fight inside the unions on the basis of the class struggle. In all trade unions active workers should be putting forward demands for increased wages, also to fight against overtime, and for a shorter working day in the basic industries. Where active workers are putting forward demands for an advance in wages, this should be followed up by a close contact with workers in the factory or the pit, and showing them the need of attending their branch meetings in large numbers, also pointing out to them very clearly that long drawn out negotiations are futile, and usually end up by arbitration, and that strike action is the best means of bringing the bosses to reason.

(3) As one who has opposed this circular in my local lodge, and which carried a resolution by an overwhelming majority asking for its complete withdrawal, I would like to stress the necessity for all militants and active workers, to bring the subject up for discussion in the branches. There can be no such thing as democratic rights in the trade unions while communists and militants are excluded from holding delegate or official positions. This circular shows the T.U.C. General Council to be the real disrupters, by talking democracy and practising dictatorship. And to take this circular in its correct perspective reveals the particular rôle the reformist leaders intended it to play, that is, to prevent the workers organising to better their conditions, and to deny the workers the right to elect a real leadership which will ultimately get them to Socialism.

(4) Taking our experience of Rationalisation from its inception in Britain, no matter what industry it has been applied to one thing stands out clearly, the workers' conditions are getting worse. With that in mind, whether these schemes come in the form of the Cotton Control Board, National Wages Board, or compulsory amalgamation in Mining, etc, the unions ought to be exposing these schemes, showing that even when technique is improved the workers derive no benefit, and that whatever form of rationalisation is brought about under capitalism it can only bring the workers further degradation. In the light of this experience an energetic drive ought to be made in the unions to end this collaboration with Rationalisation schemes.

(5) The first task of the trade unions in preventing the development of Fascism in this country should be to endeavour to get the question of Fascism brought up in discussion as often as possible in the branches, even by linking it up with the economic issues that arise from time to time. In a general way even local leaders rarely stress the menace of Fascism. So again we cannot wait until something of a concrete character comes from them. I feel that the move must emanate from the most active members of the unions. There is also another important part the trade unions can play in the struggle against Fascism, that is, the "United Front." Here is something to strive for, in so far as we can achieve this, then only will the menace of Fascism be less likely.

(6) In the fight against Fascism and War the reformist leaders maintain that the Labour Party and the Co-operative Movement are the real United Front. Now many active workers are refusing to accept this, therefore in my opinion the unions ought to be playing a greater part in establishing this United Front with the Communist Party and the I.L.P. In the building up of the United Front we must be wide enough in our outlook to accept all regardless of their political opinions

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who are prepared to fight against Fascism and War.

GEO. RICHARDSON (*Checkweigher, member Horden Lodge, Durham Miners' Association*).

From a Trade Union Organiser

(1) Co-ordination of trade union forces is an immediate necessity if the workers are to achieve an effective presentation of their wage increase demands. The first steps in that direction can only be efficiently carried out when the rank and file in the factories and Labour Exchanges have discussed and decided on this question. It is in the factories where real trade union unity—when achieved—will have to be operated. In the factory and on the job the boss uses trade union demarcations to the workers' detriment. In the factory and on the job the workers can see in practice the artificial dividing line between workers in different craft unions. Here is where the elementary (yet actually the most complex, because so little, realised) steps should be taken for co-ordination machinery to be originated, to call factory meetings to discuss this question at which delegates are elected to broad industrial conferences on an area basis. Periodical mass area factory meetings should also be held for discussion of the relative problems.

The unemployed are referred to in the light of recent Ministry of Labour figures which show thousands of unemployed as in and out of work from month to month. These should be kept in touch with events and policy by invitation to area factory meetings (and/or the formation, through the normal functioning of the particular trade union unemployed section). Who is to call these meetings? Whether Trades Councils or Trade Unions jointly can be left to local circumstances.

As a waterproof garment worker (only recently appointed full-time organiser by the demand of the workers at a general meeting), I am particularly interested in your statement of Mr. Conley's proposal for trade union co-ordination. The Waterproof Garment Workers' trade union are at present in conflict with the Tailors and Garment workers (Mr. Conley's) Trade Union over an action of the Transport and General Workers (Manchester Branch officials.) This question is now sub-judice, awaiting at the time of writing, the decision of the Trades Union Congress General Council disputes committee.

(2) It is on the basis of the bitter but marvellous experience that we waterproof workers who are engaged in a nine months' strike at nine factories, after the recruitment of over fifteen hundred workers in fifty factories, and strenuously striving to build on the ruins of a backward small craft union with a reactionary policy, a fighting trade union—on the basis of this experience that we offer our opinion as to the line of trade union policy. We work in an industry where the workers are split into craft unions or are unorganised. We are taught the need for trade union unity by bitter experience. We waterproof workers are isolated from an important craft who if organised alongside us could assist in our fight for trade union conditions and win for themselves badly-needed improved wages and working conditions. The rubber-proofers (the craft referred to are split into several trade unions and a company union. This, in addition to those "catered" for by the Tailors' (Mr. Conley's) Union, such as waterproof cutters, brings forward as an urgent necessity the joint working out at factory meetings of: (*a*) joint national wage policy; (*b*) proposals for limitation of overtime and a 44-hour week without wage reduction; (*c*) full payment for all statutory holidays, and (*d*) the introduction in all waterproof and rubber factories of special ventilation devices to minimise the harmful effects on the workers' health of rubber and naphtha fumes, plus the regular supply of milk at stated intervals. But these policy points can only be subsidiary to the basic question of a uniform price list for all waterproof garment workers. The key to the solution of this question is obviously in the hands of the Tailor's Union which, being a National Trade Union, can wield a more powerful influence than a local Trade

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Union like the Waterproof Garment Trade Union.

The waterproof trade originated and developed in the Manchester area. But, lately due to the successes of the Waterproof Trade Union, the employers are tending to open factories in London and other areas away from our trade union influence with the objective of employing cheap female and child labour. The solution to our present difficulties in this direction cannot be found in amalgamation of the Tailors' Union and the Waterproof Trade Union. It is obvious that a small trade union that has fought for and won a forward policy, whose rules revision committee has turned down the Black Circular, cannot allow itself to be submerged into and swamped by those who operate the Black Circular and its concomitants.

Amalgamation does not in this case imply a unified and forward wage policy.

As stated the details of this question are sub-judice. (By the time this is in print the matter will have been decided one way or the other.) I can only state in conclusion that on the basis of past events and the present struggle there are splendid possibilities and a great future for the militant Waterproof Trade Union. We would like wider discussion nationally on the questions you raise in the LABOUR MONTHLY. We consider we are striking our blow against Fascism by building a militant trade union. In all our propaganda of union recruitment we constantly refer to the Fascist menace and stress the need for working-class unity. The result has been to develop among workers locally a real desire for united working-class action against Fascism and War. The results are seen in successful united front organisations and demonstrations in the area where waterproof workers live and work.

CHARLIE HARRISON (*Organiser, Waterproof Garment Workers' Trade Union*).

Previous contributions to this discussion will be found in the April issue, pp. 244-248, from *R. G. L. Bowyer* (Labour Councillor: President, Chemical Workers' Union); *R. Beamish* (Chairman, Abercrave Lodge, South Wales Miners' Federation: Vice-Chairman Abercrave and Ystradgynlais Trades and Labour Council; E.C. member, Anthracite Combine Committee); *H. Holt* (Secretary, Ardsley Branch Locomotive Engineers and Firemen); *R. Pigford* (Delegate, Ryhope Lodge, Durham Miners' Association). In the May issue, pp. 307-11, from *N. Walkington* (President, Leeds No. 1 Branch, Pattern-makers' Association: Delegate to Leeds Trades Council); *W. H. Bennett* (President, Tilmanstone Branch, Kent Mineworkers' Association: Secretary, Dover and District Trades Council, Prospective Labour Candidate for Dover); *S. Tutill* (Yorkshire Miners' Association); *J. F. Watson* (Chairman, Hetton Lodge, Durham Miners' Association). In the June issue, pp. 367-372, from *G. W. Holloway* (Yorkshire Main Branch, Yorkshire Miners' Association); *Andrew G. Schirn* (Member of National Union of General and Municipal Workers: Branch Delegate to West Ham Trades Council: Member of West Ham Town Council); *Wm. Pearson* (Checkweighman, Broomfield Pit: E.C. member, United Mineworkers' Association: Workmen's Pit Inspector); *Poplar Public Services Branch, National Union of Clerks* (J. H. Lloyd, Chairman); *G. Finlayson* (District Committee Member and District Delegate to Management Committee, National Union of Waterworks Employees); and *P. A. Palmer* (Assistant Secretary, Deptford No. 2 Branch, Amalgamated Engineering Union).

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TOWARDS THE PEOPLE'S FRONT IN FRANCE

By OBSERVER

IT is by no accident of time table that in the first week of this June there occurred almost simultaneously in France these three events:

(1) The debates on the United Front at the Congress of the Socialist Party at Mulhouse.

(2) The celebration in Paris of two National Days of Friendship with the U.S.S.R.

(3) The publication by the Communist Party of a document suggesting the basis for, and inviting the formation of, a single Party of the Proletariat.

Think back to this time a year ago and you have a contrast that throws into high relief the importance and the meaning now of these events.

This time a year ago none of these three things could have happened as they did. This time a year ago the opponents of precisely these developments had easy going when they demonstrated in scores of newspaper articles, scores of speeches, the impossibility of anything of this kind ever taking place. The development which they were opposing was the development of a force and a movement worthy of the name of a People's Front against Fascism and War.

To-day, at a tempo which has astounded the defeatists and dismayed the enemy, the People's Front is on the way. In all the debates at the Socialist Congress one fact was outstanding. There was no one at all who was willing at that Congress to suggest openly the splitting of the United Front.

The silence and the admitted shift of position by many who formerly were among the most bitter opponents of the United Front were the most eloquent tributes paid to its success. The force of that success, the power of the unanswerable argument of the facts of the experience of the past twelve months are seen in their full strength when one reflects on the still terrible strength of the forces within the Second International which have during these twelve months—under the leadership of the British Labour Party—concentrated all the energy, all the venom and all subtlety of which they are capable in an effort to undo what has been done in the struggle for unity.

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But at the thirty-second National Congress of the French Socialist Party at Mulhouse on June 10—12, the debate was already shifted to another plane. The discussion turned no longer around the question of the desirability or otherwise of the United Front. Instead it turned around the question: How has the Socialist Party failed to make such great advances as the Communist Party in the operation of the United Front, and how are these mistakes to be corrected.

It was inevitable that the former opponents of the United Front should take the opportunity to suggest—without saying it in so many words—that of course once one has the United Front, then the advance of the Communists at a vastly greater rate than the advance of the Socialist must simply be accepted as a necessary evil, and that the only thing to be done about it is that Socialists should "watch their step" with greater care, should insist on the strictest limitation of United Front activity, and thus leave themselves free to conduct a more vigorous activity on behalf of the Socialist Party as such.

Although the Executive's line on this was formally supported by the Congress, it was obvious that in fact the support was in the nature rather of a general support for the Executive than a special endorsement of this line. The arguments in support of this line creaked in a fashion audible to all the delegates, who were obviously glad of the opportunity, to avoid a demonstration of wholehearted agreement with the line, offered by the intervention of the Trotskyists, who broke into the debate waving their arms in revolutionary gestures against the Executive on the ground that it had failed to carry out a Putschist policy in relation to the fascist menace.

Since the vast majority of the delegates present were at least united in support of the Executive on this point, the Executive was able to sail comfortably into port on the strength of the hot air puffed in their direction by the Trotskyists.

Paul Faure, after taking advantage of the Trotskyist uproar to attack the policy of Putschism and to rally support for the Executive by uttering a defence of the policy of mass action—with which almost everyone present heartily agreed—declared:

> There cannot be any question of breaking the unity of action, but it is necessary to take practical steps to ensure that our Party shall preserve its character.

It was Zyromski, representing the Socialists of the Seine area (the district round Paris), who put his finger on the real reason for the relative smallness of the Socialist advance. He pointed out that this was not in the least due to "excessive" United Front activity by the Socialists. On the contrary, it was due precisely to the fact that among sections of the leadership originally opposed to the formation of the United Front,

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there had remained during the past year a tendency to adopt a delaying and hesitating policy in connexion with United Front activities, with the result that time and again they might be said to have " missed the bus " : a bus upon which are travelling, so to speak, the masses of the French workers.

Nor are the workers moving along that line alone. For the first time the small bourgeoisie—including small shopkeepers and Government officials—are on the move with the workers against fascism and war. The astonishment of certain socialist leaders at this development is similar to the astonishment of certain Labour bosses in Scotland during the last Hunger March, when they found that while they were digging their heels in and refusing to join with the Communist Party and the I.L.P. in support for the march, butchers and bakers, who knew what the policy of the National Government meant for them as well as for the workers, were in many places pouring out supplies to facilitate the march and increase the power of the protest in Glasgow.

In the days before there was a united front, one of the favourite platform arguments of the socialist opponents of unity was the statement or at least the strong suggestion, that " What we gain on the Left we shall lose on the Right." Everyone will notice how closely this argument is frequently paralleled in the arguments of the subtler opponents of unity in this country to-day. The suggestion, based on a fallacious and dishonest analysis of the class forces and a gross misrepresentation of the possibilities of development, is that united front action will " frighten away " petty bourgeois elements who " might otherwise support " a " working-class policy."

It is, of course, the fact that this argument is in general used in the most dishonest possible way in order to dress up the fact that the United Front is not refused in order somehow to lure petty bourgeois elements into the ranks of fighting socialism, but in order to enable the collaboration of the chiefs of the Labour Party with the capitalist enemies of the working class.

Developments in France have exposed this argument—previously as useful to reaction there as it is to reaction here—in the most sensational manner imaginable. So that to-day, and particularly during the recent series of Cabinet crises, it was startlingly evident that large sections of the Radical Party, representing precisely these petty bourgeois elements, were actually more eager than the socialist leadership to assist in the formation of a left government supported, on definite conditions, by the Communists in the Chamber. In the words of Maurice Thorez, the leader of the French Communist Party :

> For many of the peasants, for many of the petty bourgeois throughout this country, the bogey of the Bolshevik with the knife between his teeth

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> no longer exists. For them now the thing to be feared has become fascism, the Royalist bands, the Fiery Cross, the French solidarity groups, with the dagger and the revolver. To defeat fascism one must take up the defence of the proletariat and of the petty bourgeoisie against fascism which desires to enslave us.

It is a curious fact, noted in passing by Thorez, that already the idea of the People's Front has reached the point where the capitalist press—including the bitterly hostile *Temps*—is now compelled to use the term in headlines and in reports, dropping the " Front Commun " against which so vast a propaganda had already been deployed.

The National Days of Friendship with the U.S.S.R. were a peculiarly vivid demonstration of the power of the forces which are driving towards the full development of the People's Front. The spectacle of M. Herriot heading the list of a Committee of Honour, which included Radical leaders stretching all the way from Right to Left, together with the Communist leader, Vaillant-Couturier, with Trade Union leaders, famous authors like André Gide and Malraux, with the fine flower of French scientists and artists, was one which presented in the most concrete manner the fact that no one in France to-day can afford to ignore the fact that the masses of the French people want peace, that they see a way towards the preservation of peace for the moment in the support of the policy of the U.S.S.R., and in the formation of a bulwark of pacts, enforced by the pressure of the working people in every country against the war plans of the Hitler Government.

The days of friendship were not a demonstration by or in favour of the People's Front. They were a demonstration of the state of affairs in which the People's Front is being developed and in which it will come into powerful existence. For the composition of the Committee of Honour was in itself a barometer of the state of feeling among the broad masses of the people.

It is worth quoting here certain references of Thorez to the history of the idea of the People's Front. " For those comrades," said Thorez at the beginning of June, " who find out the policy of the Communist Party by reading the bourgeois press when they get up in the morning, this (*i.e.*, the People's Front), was a revelation. But we said these things on the eve of the Radical Congress at Nantes, and we outlined them in a more precise form at Villeurbaine when we said ' There can be another policy besides that of Doumergue, besides that of Flandin, besides that of the Government of National Union.' We said: ' There can be another policy which will still not be yet the policy of a government of workers and peasants, the policy of a government of Soviets.'

" We Communists are convinced that the Soviets and the Soviets alone, will finally assure the well-being of the workers, will assure peace and liberty, but we have very forcibly proclaimed the existence of the

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possibility of reaching an understanding and of struggling to set a limit to the exploitation and the oppression of the capitalists, and to force back the menace of war.

" And in the month of October we stated that a policy powerfully based on the extra-parliamentary action of the masses, can find its expression even on the parliamentary plane, and can be applied by a Government which pays attention to the will of our country. We said ' Such a government can be formed,' . . . . and we had the question put : ' Would you take part in a government of the Left Cartel,' and we said ' No, the Communists will not participate in any other government than that of the Soviets of the workers and peasants, but they will give their support to all measures which make easier the life of the working masses. . . . ' If a government is willing simply to pay attention to the will of the country and presents this or that measure favourable to the interests of the working class, of the poor peasants, of small shopkeepers, a measure which enables us to force a retreat by fascism, well we shall support a measure of that kind, we shall vote for it."

Almost simultaneously with this review of Thorez was issued the " Charter of Unity for the Working Class of France." It is difficult to quote from this important document, for it must be read as a whole. It may, however, be noted that people who a couple of years ago would have considered such a Charter a mere game of " wish fulfilment," who did in fact consider futile and doomed to failure the first overtures of the Communist Party on the question of the United Front, who have seen these derided efforts pushed forward to magnificent victory, are forced by these experiences to understand that the Charter of Unity is not a programme put out " in the air," but is a practical suggestion issued at a moment when not only in the Socialist and Communist Parties, but in the Trade Unions, the move towards Unity has already progressed at a pace which offers good hope to the advocates of that magnificent possibility : the Single Party of the Proletariat.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A VALUABLE STUDY OF THE CAPITALIST CRISIS.

The Nature of Capitalist Crisis. By John Strachey. Gollancz. 384 pp. 10s. 6d.

IN this book Comrade Strachey has tackled a very big subject. His method of treatment is to present and examine typical capitalist theories of crisis, and to show what they really mean ; then to state the Labour theory of value, and the theory of capitalist crisis based on this ; finally, to apply this analysis to the present capitalist crisis.

The result is a very comprehensive and valuable book, easy to read, and helpful to anyone, skilled or unskilled in economics, for its clear statement of various capitalist theories as well as of the labour theory of value. The examination of the theories of Major Douglas, J. A. Hobson, and Dr. Hayek is extremely useful to any Marxist who comes up against these theories in discussion ; and the section dealing with the labour theory of value is as clear a presentation as has come as yet from any English source.

There are, however, certain matters in the book on which it seems to me that Strachey's formulations need revision—but I want to make it quite clear that these do not take away from the *general* usefulness of the book. Nevertheless, just because Strachey's explanation of the labour theory of value has its good points, it is particularly important that any tendency to misapply this theory should be noted, and also the particular point at which, so to speak, Strachey runs off the rails.

That he has run off the rails somewhere is, I think, clear from certain paragraphs on pages 270 and 271.

On page 270, after quoting Marx (III., p. 295) on the hypothesis of an accumulation so rapid that a shortage of labour develops, wages rise and the rate of profit falls because of this, Strachey says : " We begin to see that Marx regarded any tendency for wages to rise as the most fatal thing which could possibly happen to the System." A few explanatory sentences follow, and then :

> We shall suggest below, moreover, that in the case of the situation of American capitalism in 1929, it may well have been something approximating to this hypothetical limiting factor which precipitated the crisis. Indeed, it is clear that, from one point of view, a crisis precipitated by a labour shortage, a consequent bidding up of the price of labour power, and a consequent reduction in the rate of surplus value, causing a collapse of the rate of profit, already tottering from the fall of v/c, *is to-day a more likely occurrence than it was fifty years ago.* . . . For we are rapidly approaching the point where there is no net annual increment of labour offering itself for exploitation. . . . This leads us to the conclusion that *the impending stabilisation of the population,* far from offering, as is often supposed, a solution for the problems of capitalism, *will most seriously increase the difficulties of the system.* (My italics.—E.B.)

This conclusion is so greatly in contrast with the *actual* situation in the world, which most clearly reveals an " annual increment of labour " *not finding employment,* although it offers itself at every factory, that it must make the reader gasp. And the suggestion that the American crisis of 1929 was caused by " something approximating to this hypothetical limiting factor " is hardly compatible with the fact that at the height of the boom preceding the crisis there were still over two million unemployed in the U.S.A.

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What is wrong in Strachey's argument? On p. 272 he himself notes that Marx considered that "crises had in practice always been provoked by an inability to dispose of an augmented supply of consumers' goods." And yet, on p. 270, where he is developing the previous argument, he says that Marx recognised periods of rapid accumulation, rising demand for labour power, and rising real wages; and Strachey then proceeds: "And it seems probable that these boom periods were terminated (as they invariably were) by crisis collapse just because this rise in wages checked the natural rise in the rate of surplus value, and so prevented this determinant of the rate of profit from offsetting the fall of v/c." But Marx did not say this: he said that these periods of rising wages were "harbingers," not causes, of the crisis. And I think that Strachey has been inclined to accept rising wages as a *cause* of crisis because, in spite of his explanation of the labour theory of value and the general principles of Marxist economics, he is still looking for some cause of crisis, other than the contradiction between accumulation, the increased productive power of society, and the relative (in Marx's words) "poverty and restriction in consumption of the masses."

And this, I think, is due to his confusion of Marx's law of the falling tendency of the rate of profit, which is associated with the *general* crisis of capitalism, with the factors causing *particular* crises. To make this clear: in the hypothetical case of accumulation *without improved technique* the cyclical crisis would still occur through over-production. Cyclical economic crises are *sales* crises—the impossibility of selling products already made and, speaking generally, in the hands of the commercial capitalists and not of the manufacturing capitalists. Because demand from the commercial capitalists on the manufacturers is checked, therefore production is checked. Improved technique, with its increase of labour productivity, accelerates the coming of this over-production crisis, but is only a contributing factor to the over-production which is inherent in capitalist accumulation.

As a matter of fact, the tendency of wages to rise during a boom period is a factor *counteracting crisis*, inasmuch as it slightly increases the effective consuming power of the workers, and in this sense widens the market. The fact that it (temporarily) reduces the rate of profit is irrelevant if there is still an expanding consumers' market; first, because the rate of profit at that time is *above the average*: secondly, because in a boom prices are rising, and the *real wages* level is soon restored to what it was previously by rising prices (think of 1916-20 in Britain).

Another point on which Strachey seems to misapply Marx's theory is his over-simplification of the position of the capitalists. For example, on pages 246-7, he deals with the minimum rate of accumulation necessary for capitalism, and concludes that:

> Unless it pays the capitalists better to use more capital and give more employment, they will use less capital and give less employment.

In a sense this is true; but these are not the only alternatives. It may pay the *monopoly* capitalists best of all to use *more* capital and give *less* employment, even (for a time) at a higher rate of wages. And here it must be said that Strachey does not sufficiently take into account the *monopoly stage* of capitalism, the fact of the struggle of monopoly capital to expand *in its own interests*, in conflict with the interests of small capital and rival monopoly groups. Increasing production to over-production is not altogether blindness: it is a deliberate weapon, *competition*.

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And because Strachey does not bring this out clearly, he tends to accept rather too readily the general basis of the capitalist economists, namely, an enlightened capitalism which plans to avoid crises. And this in turn leads him to a certain extent to attempt to reconcile statements put forward by them, particularly by Dr. Hayek, with Marx's analysis.

Partial appreciation of Dr. Hayek's theories runs through the book. "Dr. Hayek is right in saying . . . ;" " the sense in which his opinion is correct " ; of Marx's analysis of the credit system—"this was almost exactly what . . . Dr. Hayek's theories amounted to in the ultimate analysis " ; of the barriers to capitalist production according to Marx—" this conclusion strongly reminds us of Dr. Hayek's argument."

But in fact there is nothing in common between Marx's analysis of capitalist production and crisis and that of Dr. Hayek. Dr. Hayek says crisis is caused by consumers' demand being so strong that it " pulls factors of production " from the producers' goods department, thus bringing the latter to a standstill. This is not Marx's theory ; if it has any relation to Marx's theory, it is that theory upside down, standing on its head. And only because Strachey does not see this is it impossible for him to reach the conclusion that the cause of the 1928 crisis in America was the raising of wages. (The reader will see the contrast between the Marx and Hayek theories more clearly if he will look at Varga's " The Great Crisis ;" Chapter, 1.)

Of course, Strachey would never have expected that his book could be the " last word " on the nature of capitalist crisis. He has made a very courageous and useful beginning of an analysis of capitalist crisis, and I hope that in later works he will carry this further, paying particular attention to the part played by monopolies in the present stage of capitalism.

EMILE BURNS.

WOMEN IN THE IRISH STRUGGLE.

Rebel Irishwomen. By R. M. Fox. (Talbot Press Ltd.) 204 pp. 3s. 6d.

THESE sketches of well known Irishwomen present an intimate picture of the significant part played by them in the struggles of their people for freedom. The names include such prominent figures as Madame McBride, Countess Markievicz, Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington, Mary MacSwinney, as well as lesser-known women who have also made valuable contributions as writers, agitators, organisers and actual fighters in times of armed conflict.

The biographies are written rather fulsomely and in a very idealistic style but apart from this they serve the good purpose of showing the heroic fight which many Irishwomen have waged.

The account of the Women Prisoners' Defence League during the years when many Republicans were arrested makes interesting reading. This band of women fought ceaselessly and the glare of publicity they kept on the prisoners' question undoubtedly heightened the morale of the struggle. Many of them were also arrested but forced their way out by hunger-striking.

The book records different experiences of the treatment of Republican prisoners which illustrates well that peculiar brand of brutality appertaining to British authorities and military officers—a brutality hidebound in caddishness and snobbery.

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Many of the women forming the subject matter of the book are still playing an active part in the Irish struggle—mostly in the opposition to De Valera who is refusing to declare the Republic, or break the bonds tying Ireland to Britain in accordance with the 1922 Treaty. The particular political camps in which they are aligned would have been a matter of interest, but the author omits this point in his sketches. A Labourite himself, he stresses the Labour as well as Republican sympathies of such women as Maud Gonne MacBride, describing them as " disciples of Connolly, standing for his labour and nationalist ideas." It is inaccurate, however, to apply such an appellation in its entirety to some of the cases mentioned.

Connolly's socialist and republican views were equally entwined in his outlook and struggles, but the same cannot be said of some sections of Irish Republicanism which pay him homage. The economic and social programme of the I.R.A., for example (of which organisation Madame MacBride is an outstanding adherent), aims at best at curtailing the power of big capitalism. It entertains utopian ideas of restoring old Celtic conditions.

Among present-day Irishwomen the Connolly tradition is embodied much more in such a figure as Mrs. Despard. She is accorded a very short sketch, however, and her special political ideas are not brought out. For achieving the victory of both the social and republican issues in Ireland Mrs. Despard stands for the building up of the united front of all sincere republican and working-class forces, together with the advancement of the working class to power as the sole class interested in and capable of abolishing internal and external oppression.

It is to be hoped that others of these women fighters in Ireland will also in the near future align themselves with the camp of the united front. A multiple sectionalism is at the moment seriously playing into the hands of De Valera, but a united front could speedily stem the retreat from British imperialism and ward off the increasing attack on the working class. It is worthy of note that the latest move in this attack (Conditions of Employment Bill), is of special urgency for Irishwomen, for it contains provisions for abolishing their rights and imposing a fascist policy of exclusion of large sections from industry.

V. S.

TRUE TO TYPE.

Fighting Through Life. By Joe Toole. (Rich & Cowan.) 239 pp. 5s.

JOE TOOLE, Labour leader, surveys the world with great satisfaction. This local boy, who has made good, cannot but help exclaiming " Somebody deserves a vote of thanks for allowing me to live through such an eventful period. To have worked with and for the poor, *and to have known intimately how the rich live* (my italics—W.R.) . . . compels the thought that given a selection of the period in which one would have lived, could not have resulted in the choice of a more interesting one."

And it seems from this book that it is just this contact with the rich that makes Mr. Toole so happy, for it was they who made it possible for him to enjoy booze, horse racing, music halls, and the other good things of life. Mr. Toole is, of course, referring to the gentlemanly rich not the wealthy upstarts. He is even on speaking terms with real live lords. About Lord Birkenhead he writes, " privately he was a delightful man to know." Then there is Lord Derby who " has a great genius for friendship," and also the late Lord Dewar " with whom I had very happy times."

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This is a silly little book by a funny little snob who has padded out his petty life story with dozens of platform cracks and jokes of the *Tit-Bits* variety. But still it has a certain interest. It reveals the soul of a labour leader, of a type to be found in all parts of the country: men who like Joe have become tools of capitalism.

Toole was a slum child who became a Socialist and afterwards succumbed to all the influences brought to bear by capitalism. His rather blunted recollections of his early life do at least carry a flavour of the working-class struggle, but after the war, and when he became M.P. for South Salford, all this disappears and is replaced by racy stories about rich friends, dinner parties and actors. Toole had entered a new world where even the word Socialism is never breathed. All this we understand for he is not the only one who has become respectable and sycophantic, but what we can't understand is why he should want to write a book about it.

W. R.

JAPAN ON THE ROAD TO FASCISM.

Militarism and Fascism in Japan. By C. Tanin and E. Yohan. Introduction by Karl Radek. (Martin Lawrence.) 320 pp. 8s. 6d.

COMING just when Japan is making a new move in her consistent and well-planned policy of "preserving the peace of Asia," the publication of this excellent book is very timely. Its scope is really wider than the title suggests, for in addition to tracing the growth of the numerous reactionary societies up to the period of their most intense activity (1931-32) when they attempted four coups and assassinated a finance minister, two premiers and one of the biggest finance capitalists, it gives an outline of the whole development of Japanese capitalism.

One merit, in contrast to most books in English on Japan, is that the authors have gone direct to sources in Japanese for most of their material. This is all the more necessary as in Japanese journalism, material for foreign consumption is notoriously different from that put on the home market. A large Osaka newspaper constantly omits from its English edition news that it thinks better kept "within the family circle," while from the English edition of the *Oriental Economist* Japan would appear as a paradise of eternal security for the investor, whereas from the Japanese edition one realises that actually she is on the brink of revolution.

On this original material the authors have used Marxist-Leninist method with great competence, and succeed not only in showing the broad economic forces at the back of various social trends, but also in correlating day-to-day realignments among political parties with changing economic factors. The following is a brilliant example of this detailed application of the method. It refers to conditions in 1932:—

> Thus those sections of the Seiyukai bourgeoisie centred around the Mitsui concern were in the beginning strong advocates of inflation, but after speculation on the dollar exchange had enriched them by hundreds of millions of yen, and when a further drop in the yen exchange threatened to depreciate their accumulations and create unprofitable conditions for the purchase of American cotton, these groups of the bourgeoisie, as the import season was approaching, came out against further inflation and demanded that the yen exchange be stabilised at the lowered rate of exchange. On the other hand, the Minseito bourgeoisie, connected with the Mitsubishi firm, with shipbuilding and machine-building, and less concerned about foreign markets, started out as violent opponents of inflation, and later, hand in hand with the militarists, called loudly for further

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> inflation when it became apparent that inflation was the only means by which heavy industry could secure to itself the government subsidies which it receives. (p. 158.)

In the historical section, the authors make a serious error in regard to primitive accumulation when they say it took place after the Sino-Japanese War, and fail to understand that "the so-called primitive accumulation . . . is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production" (Marx). The great encyclopædic work, *The Growth of Japanese Capitalism* by a number of young Marxist scholars was probably not published in time for the authors to avail themselves of it, but it is a pity they did not read the work of Eitaro Noro, the pioneer in this research who was murdered by the police last year. Noro shows clearly that in Japan the state played a specially violent part in the process, so that in the period immediately preceding the Sino-Japanese War thousands of peasant proprietors were expropriated by excessive taxation and enclosure of common lands. The authors make no mention of this convulsive period.

One thing that emerges clearly from the book is the close connection between the reactionary chauvinist societies, the militarists grouped round the Emperor, and the capitalists, right from the early days when, financed at first by the Yasuda firm, "the Black Dragon Society was virtually transformed into the secret agency of the War Minister abroad" (p. 44), to the autumn of 1932 when "new steps were undertaken by the militarists through the society of reservists for coming into closer contact with business circles" (p. 270).

In the last chapter the authors conclude that the reactionary chauvinist movement cannot be called fascist in the "West European sense" because :— (1) "taken as a whole, it is the instrument not only of finance capital, but also of the Japanese monarchy which represents a bloc of two class forces : finance capital and semi-feudal landowners, and besides this possesses a logic of its own development, represented by the army and monarchist bureaucracy whose oppression has an independent significance" (p. 267) ; (2) it makes only limited use of demagogy.

Radek disagrees with them on both these points. As regards the second, it is certainly unfortunate that they should take such a static view, when they themselves give example after example to show the rapidly increasing use of demagogy, especially since the beginning of the crisis and the Manchurian War, and they themselves show the particularly vile rôle social democracy has chosen to play in this process. In the two years since the book was written, the tendency has been greater still, what with the utilisation of the programme of the "converted" communists, Sano and Nabeyama, in 1933, and the publication of the army's "socialist" pamphlet last year. In one sense Japan is the most fascist of all the great Powers, for she alone so far has actually embarked on a war in an endeavour to find a way out of the crisis and to crush the revolutionary mass movement.

On the first point Radek maintains that in spite of the existence of feudal elements finance capital rules in Japan. The problem—an extremely difficult one—was ably treated in an article by Nakata in the LABOUR MONTHLY, Vol. 14, No. 1, January, 1932. Radek proves that the landowners are becoming more and more subordinate to finance capital, but he does not tackle the more difficult problem of the independent power of the monarchy. In this connection the following two quotations from Lenin are always given :—

> The class character of the Czarist monarchy does not in the least lessen the tremendous independence of the Czarist power and the "bureaucracy" from Nicholas II. down to the last magistrate.

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> In Japan and (Czarist) Russia the monopoly of military force, endless territory, or special convenience of plundering foreigners, China, etc., partly replace and partly supplement the monopoly of modern finance capital.

These seem to me to conflict with Radek's view, but in a given concrete situation it is a nice point of dialectics to decide when they are supplementing and when replacing. In any case, even if state power in Japan cannot be wholly reduced to the rule of finance capital, that seems no reason to deny the name fascist to these new methods described by the authors when they resemble so closely those of Hitler and Mussolini.

There are some misprints and errors in the book. Nakano (p. 258), Adachi's lieutenant, is confused with Nagano, the revolutionary peasant leader. "1847" (p. 36) should be "1874." "Possible" (p. 174, line 39) should be "impossible"; "capitalists" (p. 216, line 19) should be "militarists," while the transposing of Japanese names into Russian and from Russian into English has led to inaccuracies.

M. B.

HISTORY THROUGH RUSSELL'S SPECTACLES.

Freedom and Organisation, 1814-1914. Bertrand Russell. (Allen & Unwin.) pp. 528. 15s.

THE appearance of this history[1] of the nineteenth century by one of the foremost leaders of Liberal bourgeois thought should in any case be of interest to Marxists. Clever, plausible, sometimes witty, and full of choice gossip about great men, this book appropriately takes its motto from Milton, "Chaos umpire sits . . . chance governs all." Its theme is that "history, in short, is not yet a science, and can only be made to seem a science by falsifications and omissions" (p. 8). This, in itself, constitutes a direct challenge to Marxism. But the book is further of special interest to Marxists because unlike so many bourgeois histories dealing with the nineteenth century it actually admits the existence of "a certain Marx and Engels," and devotes some fifty pages to a discussion of their doctrines. And as this part of the book repeats some misunderstandings of Marxism that are very prevalent among the intellectuals, together with some entirely "original" misconceptions on the part of Russell himself, a reply, such as we attempt here, is demanded.

"I am a British Whig, with a British love of compromise," Russell wrote in his "Sceptical Essays." As in politics, so in philosophy and in history. Everywhere Russell attempts to compromise, to mix the elements of mutually incompatible theories. His theory of history, so far as he can be said to possess one, is just such an eclectic mixture, in which fragments of Marxism are jumbled together with the "great man theory" of Carlyle, and ultimately "chance governs all." Just as in his philosophy, the idealist element predominates, so that he is ultimately helpless and all his snatches of Marxist insight turn out in vain. We will give a few examples to prove these statements before passing on to consider explicitly Russell's attack on Marxism.

In the first place, for all his attack on Carlyle's "great man" theory, Russell attaches a quite disproportionate importance to individuals, seeing them not as called upon to fulfil certain historic tasks (and fulfilling them well or badly, as the case may be), but as men *creating the world in their own image*. Thus of Bismarck he says: "The world that he created was of a piece with his emotions. It was divided into Germany, which was to be cherished, and the rest of the

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globe, which was to be either used or subdued. He was himself harsh, restless and heroic, and he sought to re-mould the world in his own image. Unfortunately, he was largely successful." (p. 433.) With such a conception of the rôle of great men it becomes understandable why Russell should devote such a large part of his history to gossip and tittle-tattle about the personal qualities of his heroes.

Secondly, Russell's subjective attitude to history is shown by his arbitrary choice of topics, for instance by the exaggerated importance he attaches to the "philosophical radicals" (Benthamites) and his neglect (in spite of his treatment of Marxism) of most of the later developments of Socialism. Only two lines are devoted to the Paris Commune, "that sphinx so tantalising to the bourgeois mind," which was the first example in history of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such a "minor" factor as the formation of the Bolshevik party in Russia (and the Russian revolutionary struggle in general) gets no mention at all. The Great War is seen to be the result of economic forces "which have been operative for fifty years and are still growing stronger" (p. 509), but characteristically enough Russell adds: "Though statesmen foresaw the result they lacked the will and the intelligence to prevent it; impotently, though not blindly, they drifted to disaster." (p. 479.)

Writing of the origins of Marxism, Russell says:

> From Hegel came the love of an all-embracing system, and the belief that history is the orderly working out of an intellectual scheme, with the same inevitability and the same sharpness of opposition as in the Hegelian dialectics. (p. 204.)

Now readers of Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der Klassischen Deutschen Philosophie* will remember that Engels contrasts the Hegelian *system*, which was *conservative*, with the dialectic which was *revolutionary* and was taken over by Marx. Hegel's system was the last of the great systems historically, "because, even if unconsciously, it showed the way out of this labyrinth of systems to a real positive knowledge of the world." Marxists have always denounced "all-embracing systems" because of the arbitrary finality about them, and the continuous development of Marxism by Lenin and others is proof that it is no such "system." Still more misleading is the attribution to Marx of "the belief that history is the orderly working out of an intellectual scheme," when he very clearly states the *exact opposite*. Compare the Preface to *Capital*, 2nd edition, as follows:

> My own dialectical method is not only fundamentally different from the Hegelian dialectical method, but is its exact opposite. For Hegel, the thought process (which he actually transforms into an independent subject, giving to it the name of "idea") is the demiurge of the real; and for him the real is only the outward manifestation of the idea. In my view, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing other than the material when it has been transposed and translated inside the human head.

This is not just a verbal point, as the reader may think, but absolutely fundamental, since elsewhere Russell says that:

> The elements of dialectic which Marx took over from Hegel made him regard history as a more rational process than it has in fact been, convincing him that all changes must be in some sense progressive, and giving him a feeling of certainty in regard to the future, for which there is no scientific warrant.

Apparently it must be emphasised again and again that Marx based his analysis of Capitalism on no *a priori* "intellectual scheme," but solely on the *objective facts of Capitalist society*. By a study of these facts he deduced the "laws of motion of Capitalist society," and the extent to which Capitalism has in fact developed as he predicted is the test of the validity of his analysis. A like test applies to Marxists to-day (and it may interest Russell to know that

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in 1928, while he was predicting the continuation of American "Prosperity," the Comintern discussed the development of a new economic crisis). It is no more true that Marx regarded all change as "in some sense progressive." Russell brings up this question because he wants to suggest that barbarism is an alternative to the victory of the proletariat in the present class struggle. Like Carritt in the recent LABOUR MONTHLY discussion, he maintains that the "dogmatic optimism" of the Communists has a mystical basis. To this argument Rudas has already replied:

> People who speak glibly of the eventuality of barbarism have little power of imagination, they do not know what they are saying. . . . For the highly developed productive forces of modern society and the mere existence of a multi-million proletariat *make any return to "barbarism" impossible.* The immanent laws of modern society compel the proletariat to fight till it is victorious. Death or victory—this is the only alternative for the proletariat. But death is impossible for thousands of millions, not to speak of the existence of the Soviet Union. (LABOUR MONTHLY, Sept., 1935.)

But if Russell starts by attributing to Marx those very idealist views of Hegel that Marx explicitly rejected, he becomes bolder with experience, and soon we learn that no other than Jeremy Bentham is to be regarded as the parent of Marxism! Jeremy Bentham! whom Marx called "the insipid, pedantic, leather-tongued oracle of the commonplace bourgeois intelligence of the nineteenth century," every one of whose doctrines he ridiculed, made into a forerunner of Marxism! Yet speaking of the Benthamites Russell says:

> Almost all their characteristic doctrines survive in Marxism: the belief in the innate similarity of all men, the belief in reason, the cosmopolitanism, the appeal to self-interest, and the emphasis upon material prosperity (p. 389).

This amazing distortion of Marxism leaves one almost breathless. It is difficult to take it seriously. But it is in the good old traditions of bourgeois anti-Marxism, which has always preferred to construct (and then pull to pieces) a "Marxism" of its own, *than undertake* a conscientious study of the real thing.

From all the particular criticisms of Marxism that are made by Russell we can only select a few of the most important. First, in regard to dialectical materialism, Russell repeats Carritt's argument (well known to readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY), "that the whole of his theory of economic development may perfectly well be true if his metaphysic is false, and false if his metaphysic is true" (p. 220), and even goes on to say that "the belief that metaphysics has any bearing on practical affairs is, to my mind, a proof of logical incapacity" (p. 226). We will not answer this in detail here as it has already been answered by Rudas in the LABOUR MONTHLY discussion (reprinted in pamphlet form as "Dialectical Materialism and Communism," 6d. each), but we must point out that it is no objection to urge, as Russell does, that "one finds physicists with all kinds of opinions. On the contrary, it is just the dialectical materialist conception of the unity of theory and practice that explains *why* one finds "all kinds of opinions," and why the tendency towards mysticism and reactionary idealism has grown so much in recent years. Metaphysics is not purely abstract, but *deeply rooted in social conditions*, and Earl Russell, whose whig philosophy corresponds so well to his Whig politics, is an excellent illustration of this fact.

Following Sidney Hook, Russell finds a divergence between the philosophical views of Marx and Engels. Apparently Marx was mistaken in calling himself a materialist and "it may be doubted whether Engels quite understood Marx's views on the nature of matter and the pragmatic character of truth" (p. 222). Needless to say, Marx and Engels themselves (not to speak of Lenin) were quite unaware of this "divergence"! The whole argument is based on the famous

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" thesis " where Marx criticises Feuerbach for seeing only the opposition of " object " and " idea," ignoring the " human sensuous activity " by which the " idea " of an " object " is obtained. It was the defect of the earlier materialism that it ignored this " human sensuous activity " (in keeping with its main concern for mechanics and physics), while the new materialism that took " human sensuous activity " as its subject matter had from the very start to emphasise this factor. But neither in this " thesis " nor anywhere else can evidence be found that Marx believed matter " in its completed form " to be " a human product " (p. 222), nor does this conclusion follow from understanding that " knowing " is an *active process*. On the contrary, starting with an understanding of this it is possible to proceed, as in all metaphysical questions, *either* towards materialism *or* towards idealism. Marx took the road to materialism. There is no doubt, as Russell is forced to admit, of Marx's belief in the *reality* of Capitalism, and that he believed the Communist revolution would actually take place " not merely that it is convenient to think so " (p. 223). So we can leave to Dewey and the pragmatists the honour of having taken the alternative *idealist road*, and while the criterion of truth of the pragmatists (and bourgeois ideologists in general) is " convenience " we shall contrive to use as our criterion " agreement with objective reality."

While it is impossible to deal here with all the questions raised by Russell in his chapter on the " Theory of Surplus Value," there is one really gross blunder that cries out for refutation. The Marxian tendency of wages under capitalism towards a subsistence level " is said to depend on Malthus' theory of population ! Now it should be impossible for any careful reader of *Capital* to miss Marx's direct references to Malthus, such as the following :

> The conservative interests whose servitor he was, made it impossible for him to see that an unlimited increase in the working day, combined with an extraordinary development of machinery and with the exploitation of the labour of women and children, could not fail to make a large proportion of the working class " superfluous." . . . Naturally it was far more convenient to himself, and far more accordant with the interests of the ruling classes . . . for him to explain this " over-population " as due to the eternal laws of nature, instead of explaining it as the outcome of nothing more than the natural history of capitalist production. (*Capital*, Chapter XV., section 4. Dent Edition.)

Thus Marx explicitly rejects the Malthusian " theory of population." On what then does the Marxian " tendency of wages to a subsistence level " depend ? The reason is partly indicated in the above passages, but is exhaustively treated in the chapters on " Accumulation of Capital." Here Marx shows how in the beginnings of Capitalism *force* has to be used by the State Power to reduce the workers " to a proper condition of dependence on capital," *i.e.*, to increase working hours and reduce wages " within the limits suitable to the working of surplus value." Once this has been done and Capitalism has got on to its feet then the " natural laws of capitalist production " ensure the maintenance of these conditions for the workers. What are these " natural laws " ? Marx is speaking here of the growth in the organic composition of capital that accompanies capitalist development, of the process that leads to the formation of an " industrial reserve army of labour." Not only the relative, but ultimately the *absolute* demand for labour diminishes with the further development of capitalism. This law is strikingly illustrated by the post-war development of U.S.A. capitalism. 1919-1929, when production rose by 42 per cent., but the number of workers employed fell by 6 per cent.—this during the so-called " prosperity " period ! (Social Aspects of Rationalisation, I.L.O., quoted by Burns & Roy in the " Roosevelt Illusion.") Thus on *any* law of population increase, and even in some cases of *decrease*, those conditions will

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exist which tend to keep wages down to a subsistence level. All this we see taking place before our eyes to-day, although nobody would pretend that the Malthusian " law of population " was at work.

Now it is difficult to suppose that anyone could have read *Capital* seriously and have misunderstood it in the way that Russell has done. We must conclude that he has *not* read it, but need not be surprised at his writing about it in spite of that, for unfortunately this is the common attitude of bourgeois writers towards Marxism. For if " history is not a science," what need is there to approach it in an objective spirit, to make sure, as we would in physics or biology that we know something about a subject before we begin to criticise it ?

Leaving aside for lack of space the many other misrepresentations of which Russell has been guilty, some even more striking than the above, we will just consider one question that has become prominent since Mr. H. G. Wells' recent visit to the U.S.S.R., viz. the "antiquated Marxian idea of class war." " Marx's doctrine of the class war," Russell tells us, " was one of the forces that killed nineteenth-century liberalism in Europe, by frightening the middle classes into reaction . . . " (p. 252). Unfortunately Russell overlooks the fact that the class war existed long before Marx's " doctrine," and still longer before it could be an effective force in practice. And the middle class (more strictly *capitalist* class and its hangers-on) showed the same tendency then to be frightened by any *independent* move of the proletariat that it has shown since Marxism became a power. This very tendency is the main theme of Engels' book on *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, where it is said, for example that :

> Against the victorious working men, although he had not yet uttered any specific demands for himself, the friends and foes of many years united, and the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the supporters of the over-turned system was concluded on the very barricades of Berlin.

How unable Russell is to understand contemporary developments just because he rejects the " doctrine of class war " we see in the following passage : " In America, where Marx has had little political influence, old-fashioned liberalism still survives, and is at present engaged in a quite un-Marxian attempt at reconstruction " (p. 252). Perhaps in a few years Russell will recognise that " old-fashioned Liberalism " has become " new-fangled Fascism." But it is very doubtful if he will find this an argument in favour of Marxism. For Russell is at heart a sceptic, and of his scepticism it may be said that it is truly " pragmatic " !

DAVID GUEST.

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Published by the Proprietors, the Trinity Trust, 7 John Street, W.C.1, and Printed by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 99 Church Gate, Leicester

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